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EXPOSTULATORY ADDRESS.

ENDEAVOURING

To awaken, excite, and encourage the ignorant, careless, and negligent, to seek the LORD while he may be found, and call upon him while he is near; and to mind what concerns their eternal peace, before it be hid from their eyes.

Chiefly designed for those in the middle and lower stations of life.

Acts ii. 21. And it shall come to pass, that whoever shall call upon the Name of the LORD shall be saved

Luke vii. 22. To the poor the gospel is preached.

James ii 5. GOD hath chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom.

I Cor. i. 20. Not many wise, not many noble are called; but GOD hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise;—the weak, the base, the despised;—that no flesh should glory in his presence.

Luke xvi. 25. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime received thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

Acts xxv. 26. And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled.

Psal. l. 22. Now consider this, ye that forget GOD, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver you.

By a PRIVATE CHRISTIAN.

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The P R E F A C E.

TH E consideration of what appears to be the general state of mankind, ought to be very affecting to persons who believe immortality and the truth of the scriptures, when they consider so much of the world yet lying in ignorance and wickedness, and without the ordinary means of the knowledge of the ways of salvation ; but still more, when they consider what appears to be the general state even of such as are educate and brought up under the profession of the true religion, according to the scriptures ; to observe the ignorance of gospel doctrines, and these things that are essential to constitute a real Christian ; and when they see so many evidently living as without God in the world, who, though they profess to know and believe in God, yet by their works deny him, only living a mere sensual life as the beasts, only seeking to gratify and satisfy their sensitive need and appetite, altogether careless and negligent about their future state, despising and neglecting the great salvation revealed and offered to them in the gospel, now while it is yet in their offer. How much better were it for such, who, as they live like beasts, not minding religion, if they were to be annihilated, to die into a no more existence, as the beasts do ? Such considerations ought to make thoughtful persons tremble, and horror take hold of them.

Oh what pity, compassion, and commiseration ought to fill us, what endeavours ought it to stir up to, that such brands may be plucked out of the fire before they be cast into the everlasting burnings, out of which there is no redemption. I hope something of such compassion hath led and excited me to venture thus to warn, stir up, and encourage thoughtless, careless sinners, if, by the blessing of God, it may be a means to awaken any to consider their state and their ways, and mind what

concerns their eternal peace, before these things be hid from their eyes.

I know such manner of writing will be despised by some, and reproached by others: simplicity of truth, and plain freedom, is not only disgusting, but hated by those who hate the light, and will not come to it lest their deeds be reproved, and their deceitful peace disturbed, though they sleep as upon the top of a mast: but if I obtain the approbation of the sovereign Judge, if he says, "Well done, good and faithful servant," I will little regard what the carnal politicians, and wise men of the world, say of this or of the author. The word of God tells us, Matth. ii. 25. and the experience of all ages, that the true knowledge of divine truths is not confined to literature, philosophy, and rhetoric. Truth is most attractive and most powerful in its native purity and simplicity; it is deceit that needs to be varnished: the poor, as well as the rich, were permitted to bring to the offering of the Lord; goats hair and badger skins were accepted, and made serviceable to the tabernacle; our Lord commended the poor widow for casting in her two mites to the offering, more than those who gave of their abundance.

A great part of the multitude of writings now, are such as Satan, mens covetousness and vanity, excites to, calculate to fill the head, but no way to better the heart; engines to divert the mind, and take up the time and thought, that ought to be employed in minding the one thing needful, the writers seeking to profit themselves, and not their readers.

How lamentable is it, that so much precious time should be spent, from an ambition and thirst after human knowledge, which in a short time will vanish away, and leave the mind or soul little or nothing wiser or better; while so many such spend so little of their time and thought in seeking after spiritual and divine wisdom, studying to know God in Christ, as by him reconciling the world to himself; whom to know is eternal life and happiness! Surely that knowledge is more interesting, and to search into the mysteries of redeeming love yields more pleasure and satisfaction, and is more sublime

sublime and elevating to the heaven-born soul, than the knowledge of the world, or searching into the mysteries of nature ; to know their connections, dependencies, powers and operations toward each other : the knowledge of these things is good and necessary, and worthy to be searched into by a rational mind, if kept in subordination, and leading to God, the great creator and operator in all, and who is the end of all ; but when it takes up the time, and diverts the mind from God, it proves pernicious. Persons may be happy who know little of the world, or mysteries of nature ; but it is impossible for any person to be happy without the knowledge of God, as reconciling the world to himself by Christ Jesus ; that is absolutely and indispensably necessary to salvation and happiness. But I write chiefly to those who have little time to read, and as little money to spare. Indeed it grieves me to observe working people, the bulk, the strength and upholders of a nation and church, so much despised and neglected, as if their immortal souls were not as precious and valuable to God and themselves as the souls of the great and the rich, and as capable of eternal glory and happiness, or misery, as they. If this may be useful to any of them, I shall be thankful, and give God the praise.

There are several notes interspersed, that have no immediate connection with the subject of the pages where they are placed ; but as the author is of opinion that they may be worthy the consideration of some, he chused to let them stand as they are placed, without making any particular references.



An expostulatory Address.

IT pleased Almighty God, though within himself possessed of all possible happiness, incapable of any addition or diminution of happiness, from no necessity of nature, but of mere sovereign goodness, to create the worlds, and to give being to rational creatures, and by them and to them to manifest his own glory. He created man after his own image, in righteousness and true holiness, capable of glorifying him by his obedience, and of enjoying him as his chief good and happiness, and wrote his law in his heart. Also it pleased God, from the depths of infinite wisdom, to manifest his sovereignty over his creatures ; and, as a test of man's voluntary subjection and obedience to him, was pleased to forbid him to eat the fruit of a particular tree in the garden wherein he placed him, on the pain of death. It was the goodness of God, that he made man capable of a two-fold happiness, his chief good and happiness arising from a sense of the love of God, and the communications of it ; and also a sensitive pleasure or happiness, arising from the use and enjoyment of the creatures : yet, notwithstanding the prohibition, man, through the blinding, delusive insinuations of Satan, was drawn in to eat of that forbidden fruit, and then instantly the penalty or threatening was inflicted on him, as it appears, Gen. iii. 7, and 8. for no sooner had he eat the fruit, than his eyes were opened to see his guilt, his shame, and nakedness, and spiritual death, in being cut off from the love of God, and also love to God ; and fear immediately seized him ; for his conscience being defiled, and accusing and condemning him, he no longer considered God as a friend, but as an enemy and avenger ; and immediately became so ignorant, and stupidly foolish, as to endeavour to hide himself

himself, in a thicket of trees, from the almighty omnipresent God : he also, from that instant, became subject to natural death, and liable to eternal death and punishment ; and, as he considered God as his enemy, he also became wholly alienate from God, and turned himself to place and seek his happiness in the enjoyment of the creatures : wherefore God, in righteousness and awful judgment, as man had believed Satan more than God, he justly gave him up to be subject to the blinding power and the deceitful influence of Satan ; and as he preferred sensitive pleasure, in the use and enjoyment of the creatures, to the obedience he owed to God, and the happiness he had in enjoying the communications of his love and favour, God justly gave him up to be led and governed by his sensual appetites and corrupt affections, so as neither reason nor conscience had any more the commanding power : and Adam, being constitute by the sovereign God as foederal head of mankind, they being also virtually and seminally in him, by him, or in him, all mankind sinned, and the human nature was corrupted. Although God did not deprive the human nature of rational powers, yet they became all weakened, disordered, and perverted ; and so we find all mankind to this day still alienate from God, and still vainly seeking after happiness in creature-enjoyments, though scripture and universal reason do testify, happiness, and the rest of the soul, is not to be found in them, they not being suitable nor sufficient to the unbounded desires of the soul, Eccl. i. 8. yet the weakened power of reasoning that remains is the chief excellency that mankind hath above the beasts. But real religion, which, by the renewing grace of God mankind is yet capable of, elevates the true Christian, or spiritual man, as much above the natural man, however learned and sagacious, as their reason and philosophy exalts them above the beasts, Psal. xlv. 20. " Man in honour, and " understanding not, is like the beasts that perish." But as reason makes man to be capable of more sublime happiness, even in this life, than beasts, so is he equally capable of greater misery than they are, even in this life. Although mankind is, in some measure, capable

of a kind of rational, intellectual pleasure, yet, while in their natural state, they are utterly incapable of spiritual pleasure, and true happiness, in the enjoyment of God, which is the chief happiness of rational creatures. As for corporal and sensitive endowments, and pleasures arising from thence, it is evident that beasts do enjoy them to as high a pitch as mankind, and that without fear of loss, or suffering for criminal indulgence. The happiness of a rational creature lyes in the mind and conscience, in enjoying a sense of the love of God: sensual gratification and pleasure is the chief happiness of beasts, but not of the human nature, though it is what most seek after, and content themselves with.

BLESSED

Rom. i. 19, 20. "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it to them; for the invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead: so that they are without excuse, because that when they knew God, they worshipped him not as God," &c. There the apostle proves, the being and perfections of God may be known by the remaining light of nature, and the due use of our rational powers, by viewing and considering these things we daily see and are conversant about; but as it is, Psal. xix. 1. "The heavens declare his glory, day unto day utters speech. — The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul, and making wise the simple." There is concreated and in-wrought in the human nature, a natural sense and impression of the being of a God, which it is impossible to eradicate; and our rational powers lead us to apprehensions of his being, and that God is holy, righteous, powerful, just and merciful, and that God hates sin and injustice, and that he will surely revenge and punish iniquity. From whence else can come that natural sense of shame and fear in the doing of evil, and what is not according to equity and justice, and the pleasing self-approbation, when we do what we think is good and acceptable to God, but from the natural sense that the most ignorant and untaught of mankind hath of an all-seeing, omni-present powerful God, which is still innate with reason or the human nature? Whence else can it come, that all naturally look up to God, and cry to him for help and relief when in trouble and danger, (as it is natural to us to fear when we apprehend danger) if it be not from

BLESSED be God, tho' the crown is fallen from our head, and the fine gold is become dim, ever since we sinned

the natural apprehensions that there is a God who hears and can help us ?

As God is necessarily possessed of all possible perfections in an infinite degree, and of absolute, uncontrollable power and sovereignty, he, of his mere good pleasure, created the worlds, and all creatures in them, for himself, for the manifestation of his own glorious perfections ; and created mankind a rational creature, capable of perceiving and adoring the perfections of his almighty Creator, of obeying, worshipping, and glorifying him, and being happy in so doing. It is contrary to reason, and the natural necessary ideas we have of God, to suppose he created mankind at first as we find ourselves now. To suppose a holy, righteous God, created mankind with a natural enmity, hatred and aversion to himself, and to holiness, and the sensual affections to have power over his reason and conscience, and incapable of that obedience he required, such a supposition is absurd to reason. We must necessarily conclude God made man upright ; How then came mankind to be in this wretched state we are now in ? To suppose mankind to have been created immutable, it is much the same as to be independent, and is inconsistent with the nature of creatures : and for man not to have free will, made him incapable of virtue or vice, and voluntary obedience, which only arises from the freedom of the will. The sun is incapable of virtue, notwithstanding all its benign influence, seeing it acts necessarily.

Wherefore, as God made man upright, perfectly able to do and obey all he required of him, without any disposition to evil, so it was becoming the wisdom and sovereignty of God to constitute Adam a foederal head to all his posterity, as they were all virtually and seminally contain'd in him, and he the root of human nature ; and it became the sovereignty, wisdom, and justice of God, to require a test of his subjection and obedience, and that it might appear voluntary, which test was contained in a simple prohibition, and cautioned with the most dreadful threatening in case of disobedience : yet Adam, through the blinding and delusive influence of Satan, was drawn to disobey, whereby he lost his innocence, and his conscience was defiled, and accusing and condemning him, and his nature being corrupted

sinned against him ; yet he hath revealed to us in the scriptures of truth, that he is willing and desirous that we

by the entrance of sin, the whole human nature was corrupted in him and by him.

Though God thus permitted sin to enter into the world, and all mankind to be defiled by it, yet he is no way the author of sin ; it is impossible for God to be the author of sin, as it is enmity, and contrary to his holy nature : yet God, for holy and wise purposes, for the greater manifestation of his own glory, which is the first and ultimate end of all things, permitted sin, tho' the cause of all misery, to enter into the world : and though he hath justly given up mankind to the delusive power of Satan, and his now corrupt affections, yet he hath still power to controul and over-rule the power, malice, and subtil deceit of Satan, and the enmity and corruption of mankind, for bringing about his own holy and wise purposes, for his own glory, and the good of his own elect ; and, by the permission and restraints he lays on them, he governs the world, brings about the punishments or prosperity of mankind while in this world, as he sees meet ; and, in a great measure, in the world to come, he will make the wicked their own tormentors. By God's permitting sin, his glorious perfections are more manifested than we can conceive they otherwise could have been.

The account given us in the Bible concerning the fall of man, and how his nature came to be so corrupted, is most rational : and without divine revelation, man could not have known whence he was, nor how he came to have a being, much less how he came to be as he is. It is as absurd to deny and reject revelation, as to deny and reject reason : and none ought to complain or murmur at the sovereignty of God, in constituting Adam a foederal head, seeing he was as perfectly able to keep himself as any of his posterity could possibly be, and had as much at stake as any of them could have. For it appears just and meet, that rational creatures, having freedom of will, that their subjection and voluntary obedience should be tried, and it could hardly be done by an easier command : if each individual had been to undergo trial and probation, it is to be questioned if so many, or if any should have obtained eternal life, as will do it in the method God hath chosen, by Christ Jesus ; and we lost nothing by the first Adam, but what is again purchased, and freely offered to us by Jesus Christ, the second Adam : and now our salvation doth not depend on the mutable will of man, but

we should be reconcil'd to him again, that so we may be restored to our primitive state of likeness to him, and be made happy in the enjoyment of his love and favour. And he hath given us the greatest and surest evi-

but on the immutable will and promise of God. The law is satisfied for all our transgressions, and our justifying righteousness is perfectly fulfilled by Christ Jesus, who was constitute of God as a second Adam, and foederal head, to all that are willing to be reconciled to God, and accept of his righteousness as their justifying righteousness before God, and trust in him alone for salvation, Rom. i. 19, 20. Rom. ii. 14, and 15. 1 Cor. xv. 45. Rom. iv. 24. Rom. iv. 16, and 24.

None that deny the imputation of the guilt of Adam's first sin to his posterity, to wit, their condemnation, can be quite sound in the doctrine of the imputation of Christ's righteousness, as being our alone justifying righteousness before God to salvation: and it doth not appear how it could be just with God to punish by death such as never actually sinned, if it were not so. The scheme of the uniform and united chain of Christian faith and doctrine, as it is revealed in the word of God: and agreeable thereto appears to be that only which is contained in the Confession of faith and Catechism of the church of Scotland. As the doctrines there are founded on, and warranted by the scriptures of truth, so they are the only uniform, self-consistent and united chain of doctrines, mutually depending on one another. All other save Calvinistical doctrines lead to inconsistencies and absurdities, and are contrary to scripture-doctrine, and the experience of all exercised to godliness. Calvinistical doctrine leads to exalt Christ, and give all the glory to God; other doctrines do tend to exalt human nature even in its depraved state, to the robbing of Christ of his glory; Ezek. xvi. 5. "Thou wast cast out, to the lothing of thy person, in the day thou wast born: I said unto thee, Live, when no eye pitied thee, when I saw thee polluted in thy blood." Prov. viii. 9. "They are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge." John vii. 17. "If any man do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." Hos. xiv. 9. "Whoso is wise, and he shall understand these things; prudent, and he shall know them: for the ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them, but transgressors shall fall therein."

evidence of his grace and good will to mankind that he could give, or we could receive; he hath given Christ as his witness, Isa. lv. 4. and given him as a surety and pledge (Heb. vii. 22.) of his love: John iii. 16. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoso believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life:" and he also promises to raise us to a greater degree of honour and happiness than we were in before we sinned and fell, John xii. 26. "Where I am, there shall my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour." Rev. iii. 21. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me on my throne; even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father on his throne," John xvi. 27. "And he shall inherit all things; and I will be his God." Rev. xxi. 7. "For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me." Blessed be God, that we in this happy island are privileged with the glorious gospel of his grace, and thereby have his grace in Christ revealed and offered to us: we enjoy this unvaluable privilege while far greater nations are destitute of the knowledge and means of salvation, now living in Pagan darkness, Mahometan delusions and Antichristian superstition; the world lying in ignorance and wickedness, John v. 19.

BUT if we look about, and only consider in what state the generality among ourselves appear to be in, notwithstanding the clear light of the gospel we enjoy, oh how astonishing! what shocking apprehensions must it give of the many who live in gross darkness and ignorance even of the fundamental and essential truths of the gospel, yea even some who are wise as to worldly affairs! and to consider the many who live in a careless neglect, yea many who live in open contempt of the precepts of the gospel, stout-hearted and far from righteousness, whose care and concern is only to make provision for fulfilling the lusts of the flesh, living without God in the world, walking in the vanity of their minds, as if they were made only for this life, and had no immortal souls, but were to perish as beasts.—Ah! how many live in rioting and drunkenness, chambring and wan-

wantonness, as full-fed wanton beasts sitting for the slaughter, who look too like vessels of wrath fitting for destruction, being under no restraint from gratifying their unbounded fleshly lusts, and corrupt affections, led blindfold by Satan, having no fear of God before their eyes, saying unto God, "Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways!"—And ah, how many active, busy men are to be seen, who appear to be wholly immersed in the business of this world, and yet still endeavouring to wade further into it, plodding and projecting, running about, and still panting after the dust of the earth, Amos ii. 7. still crying, "Who will shew us any good?" Psal. iv. 6. any way wherein we may make gain, a good market to buy at, or a good market to sell at, Hab. ii. 5. enlarging their desire as hell, and as death cannot be satisfied, ver. 6. that load themselves with thick clay, as if their happiness increased in proportion to their riches, and they were to have the eternal enjoyment of them, imitating the rich fool, Luke xii. laying up goods for many years, when they know not but that night their soul may be required of them, and then all their projects perish, and delusive happiness is at an end, when they enter into utter darkness: Ps. xlix. 13 "This their way is their folly:" ver 19. "he shall go to the generation of his fathers; they shall never see light." Ah, how doth Satan, the god of this world, delude and divert the men of this world from all serious thoughts and minding the one thing needful, by filling their heads and hearts with worldly cares, incumberances and contrivances! These are they from whom the psalmist, Psal. xvii. 14. prays to be delivered.—And, alas! how many are there that appear to be regular, sober, virtuous and honest, and regularly attend public ordinances, and sometimes have a form of family worship, yet evidently appear to be unacquainted with the life and power of godliness, just resting in the empty form of religion, trusting that their honesty towards men, and regular living, is sufficient, and that it will be accepted as their righteousness for Christ's sake!—And how moving is it to observe many who are wise and sagacious, sober, prudent and useful concerning the things

things of this world, learned in all sciences, appearing to know almost every thing but God and themselves, and wherein true religion and real happiness consists; and to observe many pleasant affable young persons, and of sweet natural dispositions, smart and intelligent, of the best natural parts, yet being brought up without due care and instruction about their spiritual and eternal concerns, live ignorant and alienate from God, only minding the pleasures, vanities and follies of youth!

BUT ah, what shall we say when we consider the multitudes of poor, working people, servants, and day-labourers! what ignorance and careless neglect of even the very form of religion is to be found among many of them, even in a land of gospel light, where bibles, preaching, and so many instructing books are plenty, yet so many living in gross ignorance of the true nature of real Christianity, knowing little more of it but the name! Oh, the consideration of the world thus lying in wickedness, 1 John v. 19. oh how awful, how affecting is the thought! it ought to fill us with the psalmist's disposition, Psal. cxix. 58. "I beheld transgressors, and was "grieved, because they kept not thy word;" and, ver. 53. "Horror hath taken hold of me, because of the "wicked that keep not thy law:" and, ver. 136. "Rivers of water run down from mine eyes, because they "keep not thy law:" and say, as the prophet Jeremiah, xiii. 17. "My soul shall weep in secret, mine eye "shall run down with tears," for many professed Christians, of whom it may be truly said, as it is Philip. iii. 18. "Many walk of whom I have told you often, and "now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies to "the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction, whose "god is their belly, whose glory is in their shame, who "mind earthly things," Mat. xxvi. 22. The whole twelve disciples were put in fear when our Lord told them that one of them should betray him: oh that we had evidence and ground to hope that among professed Christians there were but one of every twelve that shall not be found betrayers of him! Our Lord tells us, many are called, but few are chosen; and strait is the gate, narrow the way that leadeth to eternal life, and few

few there are who find it; but broad is the way, wide the gate that leadeth to destruction, and many go in at it. But as it was with the disciples, so it is with most professed Christians, they that have least cause fear most of coming short, and they that have greatest cause to fear, yet fear least, and are last of enquiring; and tho' their danger is told them, yet go on presumptuously.

OUR blessed Lord wept over Jerusalem, because they despised and neglected offered grace, Luke xiii. 34. and saw the calamity and misery that was coming on them for their despising the gospel: ought not we to be moved at the like consideration? Natural affections are moved at the sight or hearing of persons under bodily pain, distress and misery, or in danger, or in extreme poverty and want: but oh what stupidity and hardness of heart doth it evidence, to be so little touched when we see so many ignorant, and so many out of the way, Heb. v. 2. blinded by Satan the god of this world, to whom the gospel appears to be hid! 2 Cor. iv. 3. and it ought to affect us the more, when we perceive them ignorant of their danger, careless and secure in it, speaking peace to themselves, while every moment they are exposed to sudden eternal destruction.—If our compassions are moved, if we feel pain for, and commiserate such as are lying under sentence of death, even though we abhor their crimes, and acknowledge the justice of the sentence; how much more ought it to affect us, when we see and consider such multitudes as do evidently appear to be yet lying under the far more dreadful sentence of eternal death, and endeavour to pluck such brands out of the fire, Jude ii. 2. before they fall into everlasting burnings, from whence there is no redemption! Surely our bowels ought to yearn towards them with all compassionate endeavours. I desire and hope that some such feeling moves me to write, warning and exhorting, encouraging and exhortulating with them to mind what concerns their eternal peace and happiness before they be hid from their eyes.

BUT it is those in the lower stations of life that I first and chiefly intend to expostulate with, to wit, tradesmen, working people, servants and day-labourers, those who

who are least regarded, and generally much neglected towards these I desire to have peculiar sympathy and compassion, as they ly under many disadvantages which those of better circumstances are, or may be free from, many of whom have but hard living in this world, and have but little time they can call their own, and many of whom have got but little education, scarce taught to read, and, it may be, a bad example of carelessness and negligence about salvation, and set to work for their bread when young, and scarce taught any thing but to work and care for the things of a present life: such had special need to be exhorted and encouraged to their duty, and warned of their danger, seeing many of them are very ignorant concerning that salvation, and concerning what is necessary to obtain salvation: and I hope more success may be expected among them than from those who are brought up and live in the follies and vanities of a present evil world, seeing the prophet Jeremiah, chap. v. 5. says, he spoke to the great men, but they would not hear, and had altogether broken the yoke.

I SHALL therefore first turn unto you, my brethren of the middle and lower stations of life, servants and working people. And oh that I knew with what arguments I might prevail with you, who work so hard for your daily bread, were it even but in your short intervals of rest, to work for the bread of life, and to labour to obtain that eternal rest which remains for the people of God! John vi. 27. our Lord says, "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth to eternal life." Heb. iv. 9. "There remaineth a rest for the people of God." You who find little rest and hard fare in this world, had the more need to seek to enter into eternal rest and happiness, where you shall hunger no more, and shall rest from your labours. Revel. ii. 17. "To him that overcometh I will I give to eat of the hidden manna." And thus you may labour even when your wearied bodies are resting, neither need you to lose any time to your master or yourself; and by one hour's serious and fervent application to God in Christ, you may come to gain much more of the durable riches than ever you can gain

of worldly riches by many years working with your hands,

I SHALL, therefore, expostulate with you, by scripture and reason, and speak to some of the slight pretences and excuses that Satan and your own deceitful hearts do furnish you with, to blind your minds, and maintain your false peace, and so divert you from minding the concerns of your immortal souls till it be too late.

AND, 1st, Some excuse themselves as being poor ignorant creatures, and they know no better ; for they were not well taught, and they were obliged to work for their bread

It is hard to say, whether the consideration of the state of the rich or poor be most moving and affecting, when we see so many of the rich, who have got education, and their rational powers improv'd, refin'd and polish'd, and have attained a great degree of human knowledge, and more lively and quick uptaking and sensation of things, and now live in the fulness of all carnal and sensitive pleasure ; but when their days of pleasure and vanity are at an end, must enter into an eternity of darkness, misery and sorrow. Surely their having tasted carnal sensitive pleasure in this world, will give them a quicker sensation of misery, and they will be more sensible of the difference between pleasure and pain, happiness and misery, than those who scarce ever enjoyed pleasure in the world.

Again, to think of rational creatures, capable of sensitive pleasure in this world, and eternal happiness in the world to come, and yet, as Solomon saith, " All their days are sorrow, " and their travel grief :—all their days they eat in darkness, and " have much sorrow and wrath in their sickness." How moving ought it to be, to see so many rational creatures, having immortal souls, in such a case, living in continual toil and labour, yet in great poverty and want, not only of the comforts, but even of the necessaries of life ; and many under lothsome disease, sickness and pain, and overlooked and despised in the world, as not worth noticing, and have no hope of ease or pleasure in this world, and ignorant, careless and stupid concerning the world to come ! how miserable is such a state, while yet more dreadful their future state ! surely, as Solomon saith, " An untimely birth is " better than they." Yet surely such will not know so much the difference between good and evil, pleasure and pain, as the former.

bread when very young ; and any thing they learned when young, they have forgot by not having time to read and mind these things: but they hope God will excuse them, and have mercy upon them, and not damn such poor creatures as them ; seeing they must work hard for their bread, and they must provide for themselves and families, and all they can do is little enough ; and say that the Bible tells them, they that provide not for their own are worse than infidels : wherefore they trust in the mercy of God, and they hope all their sufferings shall be in this world. Many such like slight excuses flow from the mouths of poor ignorant creatures, blinded and deceived by Satan, stupified by worldly care and hard labour.

INDEED, it may be thought strange, that such excuses should flow from the lips of any born in Britain, where the means of knowledge are so plenty, and where instruction to the poor is so well provided for, and they may have it without any expence to themselves. But let all such know and consider, that such excuses will not be sustained as sufficient before God : let them hear what God hath declared ; John xii. 48. " The words which I " have spoken, the same shall judge him at the last day." Now hear what his words are, John xii. 46. " I am " come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth " on me should not abide in darknes." John iii. 19. " This is the condemnation, that light is come into the " world, but men love darknes rather than light, be- " cause their deeds are evil." John xv. 12. " If I had " not come into the world they had not had sin, but " now they have no cloke for their sin." And hear what God says by his prophets, Isaiah xxvii. 11. " This is " a people of no understanding, therefore he that made " them will not have mercy upon them : " Hosea iii. 16. " My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge ; and " because thou hast rejected knowledge, I also will re- " ject thee." Psal. ix. 17 " The wicked shall be turned " into hell, and all the nations that forget to seek " God." And the apostle says, 2 Thess. i. 8. " He " comes in flaming fire, to take vengeance on all that " know not God, and obey not the gospel."

MY brethren, you see it is plain from the word of God, that your ignorance will be no excuse to you, especially when you enjoy the means of knowledge, and carelessly neglect them. Doth not your own conscience condemn you, for your sloth and negligence in not seeking and endeavouring after knowledge? can you say, you have sought after it as you do after silver, and searched for it as for hid treasures? If so, surely then you had attained a competent measure of knowledge: but if your own conscience condemn you for negligence, how can you expect to be justified before God, who is just as well as merciful? But will it not appear, that you hated the light, and would not come unto it, lest your deeds should be reprov'd, John iii. 20. and that you hated knowledge, and did not chuse the fear of the Lord? Prov. i. 29.

MY brethren, know and believe, that ignorance is a damning sin of itself, as you see the word of God tells you. If the Heathens are condemned for not improving and walking up to the light of nature, Rom. i. 21. how much more guilty are you, for not improving and walking up to the light of the gospel, seeing you shall be judged by it? Rom. ii. 12.

BUT you that complain of ignorance, and are desirous to be made wise unto salvation, I shall shew what great encouragement you have to hope that God will teach you: see Psal xxxii. 8. "I will instruct thee in the way thou shalt go, and will teach thee:" and Psal. xxv. 8. "Good and upright is the Lord, therefore will he teach sinners in the way: Isaiah xlii. 16. "I will bring the blind by a way they know not, I will lead them in paths they have not known, I will make darkness light, and crooked things straight; these things will I do unto them, and not forsake them." Prov. ii. 3. "If thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding, if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of his way." Acts ii. 17, 18. "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, that on my servants and on my hand-maids I will pour

“ out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy ; and it shall
 “ come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name
 “ of the Lord shall be saved.” John vi. 45. “ It is
 “ written in the scriptures, they shall be all taught of
 “ God.” James i. 3. “ If any man lack wisdom, let him
 “ ask of God, who gives liberally and upbraids not.”

MY brethren, you see what abundant encouragement
 you have in the word of God to seek after knowledge. I
 have set before you a few of the many great and precious
 promises God hath made in his word to such as seek
 after knowledge ; I shall also tell you from his word,
 what will be the dreadful consequence if you refuse
 and neglect to seek God, now while he is yet to be
 found of you. Psal. lxxxix. 11. “ But my people would
 “ not hearken to my voice, and Israel would have
 “ none of me ; wherefore I gave them up to their
 “ own

Those that are sensible of their ignorance, value and
 desire knowledge, but their low condition in this world
 keeps them from ever attempting or expecting to attain human
 knowledge and learning, though their capacities are
 the same with the learned, let them be so wise as to seek to
 know God in Christ, whom to know is eternal life and happiness;
 and seek to win to heaven by him, which they may do with very
 little knowledge of human sciences ; and then shall they know
 whatever they desire to know. The rational powers of the
 human nature are now as gold hid in the earth, wrapt up or
 mixed with orr and rubbish, their excellency and extensive
 powers are hid and not known. All the refining and improvement
 by the most liberal education is but little, in comparison of what
 the rational soul is capable of. But many whose rational powers are
 hid, and never drawn out by education in human learning, have
 been made wise to salvation, and have made good proficiency
 by the teaching of the word and Spirit of God : in such what
 our Lord says, Matth. xix. 30. will be found true, “ Many that
 “ are first,” in the eyes of the world, “ will be last, and those
 “ that are last shall be first.” Human instruction and literature
 will then vanish away, 1 Cor. xiii. 8. and it will make no more
 addition to that perfection of knowledge in heaven, than a drop
 of water into a large pond. Oh then, you who want knowledge
 and wisdom, ask of God, who gives liberally, and upbraids none
 because of their low condition or poverty.

own hearts lusts, and they wandered in their own counsels." Prov. i. 24, &c. " Because I called, and ye refused, I stretched out my hand, (to help and receive you) but no man regarded,—but ye have set at nought all my counsels;—I will therefore laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh—suddenly: then shall they call, but I will not answer, they shall seek me early, but shall not find me, when distress and anguish cometh.— For that they hated knowledge, and did not chuse the fear of the Lord,—therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own ways." " My brethren, be not deceived, (saith the apostle) for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he reap," Gal. vi. 7. and hath told us, 1 Thess. v. 7. " The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance on all that know not God, and obey not the gospel." And our Lord tells you, John xvii. 3. " This is life eternal, to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." Indeed a person may have a good deal of notional knowledge, and yet perish for not reducing it to practice; but it is impossible for a person that knows not and understands not the gospel, and way of salvation by Jesus Christ, to be saved by him. " Without knowledge the heart is not good," Prov. iv. 7. O therefore " seek wisdom, and with all thy getting get understanding, for happy is the man that findeth it." Psal. cvii. 43. " Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord." Psal. cxi. 10. " The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, a good understanding have all they that do his commandments." Job xxi. 12. " Therefore acquaint thyself with him, and thereby good shall come unto thee; and receive the law from his mouth."

BUT as to the excuse wherewith working people, and the poorer sort, deceive themselves, that they have no time for minding the duties of religion, because they must work for their daily bread, and, it may be, have a wife and children to provide for; therefore they hope God will excuse them from what they cannot

cannot get done, seeing he is a merciful God, and requires them to provide for their families, and they would be worse than infidels if they did it not, 1 Tim. v. 8. But, my brethren, our Lord and Saviour says to you, Matth. vi. 33. "Seek ye first the kingdom of heaven, and the righteousness that leads to it, and all these things shall be added unto you:" and, Luke xii. 31. he says again, "Seek first the kingdom of God, and all things necessary shall be added to you; for your heavenly Father knoweth that you have need of these things:" and says, If your heavenly Father clothes the lillies of the field, and feeds the fowls of the air, shall he not much more clothe and feed you, O ye of little faith? Matth. vi.

IT is indeed warrantable, yea a commanded duty incumbent upon all, to work, or be some way usefully employed for the glory of God and the good of others; but working was never designed to interfere with, or be a hindrance to religion, but it may and ought to be helpful to it. You see how our Lord reproves Martha, Luke x. 41. for being cumbered about many things, and tells her, "one thing was needful, and Mary had chosen the better part, which should not be taken from her." Do you so likewise, and all things necessary shall be added.

MY brethren, do you indeed think so meanly of yourselves, as to look on yourselves made for no higher end, and capable of no greater happiness, than what you do or may enjoy in this present world? why were you made rational creatures, if it was for no other end than to eat, and drink, and work, and bring up your offspring, and serve those that are rich and in higher stations? why, beasts do all these things: do you really judge yourselves made for no higher end than beasts? Though some of your masters may regard you no more, yet pray do not so much degrade yourselves; consider you have immortal souls, equally valuable and precious as your masters, and capable of as great happiness as theirs; do not then rank yourselves with the beasts, and live as if you were made for no higher purpose than they are; but be wise in time, and carefully redeem and improve that little time you can call your own, and you will find it sufficient for answering what God requires

of you. The apostle tells us, Acts xvii. 26. "and God hath made of one blood all nations,—and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation, that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him and find him, though he be not far from any of us." There you see your extract is the same with your masters, and the end for which you were made, and placing you in such a situation in the world, that you might seek God and find him, seeing he is nigh you: and the psalmist says, cxlv. 18, 19. "The Lord is nigh unto them that call upon him in truth, and he will fulfill the desire of them that fear him."

MY brethren, do you but find a heart to redeem and improve your time, and I will find and point you out time enough, so much as God will accept as sufficient for what he requires of you, when you can get no more, and that without hindering your work, or making you losers as to the world, or defrauding your masters of what of your time is theirs.

MY brethren, know that God, of sovereign goodness and mercy to your souls, as well as to your bodies,

It hath been an ordinary observation, that the increase and decrease of religion with a person, or in a family, and in a nation, is best known by the regard they show to the Sabbath day; but the profanation of the Sabbath is now become such a common, ordinary thing, and so fashionable, that many seem to have lost all conviction of conscience, and sense of its atrocious guilt, and excuse themselves, and plead what a common thing it is for even such as make profession of religion to keep company after sermon, and to walk in company to take the air, and recreate themselves: and some plead they are much confined, and cannot win out through the week, and that it is for their health; and they think if they have attended public worship, the work of the Sabbath is over. By many such vain pretences do many excuse themselves, blind and bribe their own conscience: but when such see that God commanded a poor man to be stoned to death for doing on the Sabbath what he could plead more necessity for than most can do for entertaining company, or walking on the Sabbath, (as for such who make complimentary visits, or entertain company on the Sabbath,

hath appointed the Sabbath as a holy rest from your
toil and labour, and given you that day as your own,
and

Sabbath, they act Satan's part in so doing, in seducing one another;) can any really think God is less jealous concerning the Lord's day, the Christian Sabbath, and is not dishonoured and provoked as much for the mis-spending and trifling away his holy day now, by complimentary visits, and walking, and trifling away the Sabbath, counting it a burden, which God hath graciously appointed as a blessing? But we may allude to what the apostle says, 1 Cor. xi. 30. on the account of their profaning the Lord's supper; "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." No doubt but the profanation of the Sabbath is the procuring cause of many judgments on nations, families, and particular persons: scarce ever any that came to conviction of sin and repentance, but the profanation of the Sabbath lay heavy on their conscience, even above other sins, and as the inlet to other sins. You punish your servants for purloining your goods, are angry with them for neglecting your work, and mis-spending your time, and shall not God punish you who mis-spend his time? Mal. iii. 8, and 9. "Will a man rob God? ye are cursed with a curse, for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation, in tithes and in offerings." Evidently the mis-spending of the Sabbath is a robbing of God of his tithes and offerings; and those who rob God of his tithe of time, do as he in Nathan's parable to David, 2 Sam. xii. 4. who spared his own flock, and took the poor man's lamb: so do they who will not take a part of their own six days to recreate themselves, but rob God of a part of his seventh day to find their own pleasures in. But let such as trifle away the Sabbath, and walk to find their own pleasures on that day, know and consider the pleasure they take will end in pain, and that they are then walking in the broad way that leads to destruction, and the air they get is infectious, at least to their souls, and probably doth prove so to their bodies, while they thus take it against God's leave: they surely get a curse with it, and have no ground to expect a blessing. As for lyers-a-bed, drinkers, travellers, and gamers on the Sabbath, surely they cannot be so stupidly ignorant as to pretend any hope of salvation; surely all such may lay their account with eternal damnation, except they repent. I do not mean nor intend to reprove works of necessity and mercy; but when God is so good to us, as to allow us of his time for these purposes, it aggravates guilt, to take his time when not necessary.

and requires that you spend that whole day in the public and private exercises of religious worship, except so much as is necessary for the works of necessity and mercy. Now, what does your conscience say? Do you rise as early that day, to work out your salvation, as you do on other days to work for your masters? and are you as careful and diligent to be found seeking and serving God, and about his work, on his day, and whose eye is ever upon you, as you are to serve your masters, when their eye is upon you? and do you not think that God hath as just cause to be angry with you, when you trifle away his time, neglecting the work he commands you, as your masters have to be angry with you for trifling away their time, and neglecting their work? Mal. i. 6.

"If I be a master, where is my fear, saith the Lord of hosts?" We find Abraham, Gen. xxii. 3. and all the prophets, it is said of them, they rose early in the morning when God called them to duty; and the Psalmist says, "Thou shalt early hear my voice, and I early will seek thee," Psal. lxxiii. But alas! how slothfully do many spend the Sabbath morning? Can you say that you carefully spend the Sabbath morning in prayer, and reading your Bibles, preparing to attend public worship? and are you careful to attend it, unless when unavoidable necessity hinders you from it? do you carefully and diligently employ all the time you can get on the Sabbath, in reading, prayer, and meditation, examining into your soul's state and frame? Alas! how few servants and working people, who complain or excuse themselves for want of time, are there to be found, but what have more cause to condemn themselves for slothfully neglecting to improve the time they have? See what encouragement you have to sanctify the Sabbath, Isa. lvi. and Isa. lviii. "Blessed is the man that doeth this, that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it;—them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their offerings will I accept." And see what God threatens against such as profane the Sabbath, Jer. xvii. 27. God hath

said, see Lev. xxvi. 2. "Ye shall keep my Sabbath, and reverence my sanctuary, I am the Lord."

BUT alas! how many are there that mind religion little more on the Sabbath than in any other day of the week? The most part of the difference they make lyes in their abstaining from their stated ordinary work and business, which is no more than their beasts do, and ordinarily put on clean and better clothes that day, that so they may appear more decent, and fit to go abroad to walk, or visit their friends and acquaintances; or if they should happen to go to church, which is, alas! much neglected by many, being so very careless about it. Oh what sin and shame is it to see tradesmen, and men of business, whose time is much taken up through the week by their worldly business, so spending the Sabbath, in walking and riding for recreation, seeking their own pleasure on the Lord's day, expressly contrary to his command! Isa. lviii. 13. such evidence they are none of his servants, and that there is no fear of God before their eyes, and that they belong to another master. What shame, to see companies even of poor working people, who have so little time through the week, yet walking idly through the streets and fields; and poor old women sitting at their doors, or gathering in companies, spending the holy Sabbath in vain trifling conversation, and giving such bad example to the younger, training them up to do the like! and many appear to think that no regard is to be paid to the Lord's day but when they are engaged in public worship, or in the time of it. How much are they self-condemned, who excuse themselves from the duties of religion for want of time, and yet so mis-spend the holy Sabbath? Oh what dreadful guilt, and what fearful punishment do these Sabbath-breakers draw upon themselves! If God commanded a poor man to be put to death for gathering sticks on the Jewish Sabbath, Numb. xv. 35. what shall be done to those who so openly profane the Christian Sabbath? surely a much sorer punishment than those who despised Moses' law, Heb. x. 28. even eternal death. We love and honour God, just in proportion

portion as we love and honour his holy Sabbath, and keep from polluting it, Psal. lvi.

BUT, my brethren, even you that are servants, and such as must make out their appointed hours of work every day, yet still you may find time enough every day for the duties of religion. God is the best of masters, and easy pleased, where there is sincerity and uprightness of heart ; when the desires of the soul are towards him, small matters will please him, even a willing mind, when the duty cannot be got done so suitably and seasonably as they desire, 2 Cor. viii. and 12. We see how much the poor widow was commended, when she could give no more than two mites, more than they who gave out of their abundance, Luke xxi. 4. If you have but little time, God will accept of your little, when you can give no more ; neither doth he stand on stated times : though morning and evening are the ordinary stated times of prayer, yet, when it cannot be conveniently got done at these times, God will accept of it at any time of the day, at what time, or from what place soever it come, if it come from a sincere, upright heart, founded on faith in Christ, and the word of promise, John xiv. 14. Psal. cxlv. 18. " The Lord is nigh unto all them that " call upon him in truth ; he will fulfil the desire of " them that fear him, he will hear their cry, and will " save them : " yea, he will accept of the shortest ejaculatory prayer, put up even when employed about business, or working with your hands : he knows the situation of every one, and accepts of what a person hath, when time and opportunity will afford no more, yet so as every incident and inconveniency that could be got over will not excuse. None need to complain or excuse themselves for want of time : they that are kept closest at work, yet have time allowed to eat and refresh themselves ; many have stated hours which they can call their own ; then you may find some short time for reading a little, or for prayer, if you was somehow prevented in the morning ; and you have also time in the evening, after your working hours are over : I have seen servants doing little necessary things for themselves at such times. Let all mind salvation-work first, as the

one thing needful, that ought never to be neglected, ly behind what will. If you be wise to redeem and improve what fragments of time you may often get, you may make great progress in religion, as I know some servants have done: yea, I know a person may have communion and fellowship with God, through Christ, in the very time their hands are busily employed about their work, even then they may be lifting up their souls to God. It is vain to deceive yourselves by pretences of want of time, seeing it is the very thing for which God gives you time, and exercises his patience toward you, giving you space to repent, Rev. ii. 2. "I gave her space to repent, and she repented not; therefore I will cast her into great tribulation, and kill her children with death." Oh fear that threatening!

MY brethren, think not that your ignorance, and want of that time and convenience which some others do enjoy, will be any excuse; for you may have as much time as would be sufficient, if carefully redeemed and improved; and you have, or may have, sufficient means for instruction in the things of God, so as you may be made wise unto salvation: and God hath said, "Then shall ye know, if ye follow on to know the Lord, whose goings forth is prepared as the morning (a growing, increasing light) and he shall come as the former and latter rain, that makes the seed sown to grow," Hos. vi. 3. but it is only in the sincere and diligent use of the means that you can have any scriptural or rational ground to expect knowledge in the things of God: our Lord hath said, "Seek, and ye shall find, knock, and it shall be opened unto you:" but if you do not seek, you have no ground to hope you shall find, when you wilfully neglect the means of his appointment, prayer, reading his word, and hearing the gospel preached. Persons that wilfully neglect these things which they can do, may be certain they are yet in a graceless state, lying under the sentence of condemnation, and have no ground of hope from the word of God while they continue so to do; such wilfully continuing either in sins of omission or commission is damnable, Deut xxix. 19.

" It shall come to pass, when he heareth the words of
 " the curse, that he bless himself, and say, I shall have
 " peace, though I walk in the imagination of my own
 " heart, to add drunkenness to thirst: the Lord will
 " not spare; but the anger of the Lord, and his jea-
 " lousy, shall smoke against that man, and all the
 " curses of this book shall ly upon him."

AGAIN; some poor, ignorant creatures speak as if they hoped for mercy, and to escape punishment, because of their meanness and obscurity in the world, that, as they are despised and overlooked by the world, they think God will do so too: but let such ignorant creatures be assured God neither despises nor overlooks any, because of their poverty and obscurity in the world, Luke xii. 6. " Are not five sparrows sold for
 " two farthings? and not one of them is forgotten before God; but the very hairs of your head are all
 " numbered." Rev. xx. 12. " And I saw the dead,
 " small and great, stand before God, and the books
 " were opened, and the dead were judged out of these
 " things written in the books, according to their works." Where you see the most contemptible and obscure doth not escape the observation of God: and all must appear before his judgment-seat; and then the books will be opened, and the sins of the wicked, which were not observed, and were forgotten by them, will be brought to remembrance; the book of the law, and the book of the gospel, offering grace and pardon, and the book of conscience will be opened, and all will be judged according to their works.

THERE are also some who speak peace to themselves, because they think some are more grossly wicked and profane than they, and because they see so many like themselves; and if they know any who are more strict and circumspect, and mind the duties of religion more than they do, they think they make more ado about religion than they need, and call them hypocrites: and though they read in the Bible of persons who were called saints, and that were such, yet they scarce think there are any saints now, if some ministers be not such; and so they content themselves, thinking and saying they will fare no worse

worse than their neighbours, and say, Surely God never made so many creatures to damn them, and make them eternally miserable; and so live careless about their salvation,

THIS would require to be more largely spoken to than I can find place for; but yet I shall say something to it. I have said before, from the word of God, that the knowingly and willingly continuing in any one sin, either neglect of known duty, or deliberately continuing in any one known sin, shuts out from the kingdom of heaven, and is inconsistent with saving grace, Psal. cxix. 6. "Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments." Psal. lxxvi. 18. "But if I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear my prayers." Prov. xxviii. 13. "He that covers," or excuses, "his sin shall not prosper." Whereby you may see, that though you be not so grossly profane as some others, yet, regarding any one iniquity so as not to do what you know to be your duty, or deliberately and willingly doing any thing you know to be sin, or wilfully refusing to know what is sin and duty, and wilfully turning away from the light of the word or your own conscience, shuts out from access to God. Our Lord says to a sober young man, that he was not far from the kingdom of God; but it doth not appear that ever he entered in, for it was a certain evidence his heart was not right with God, when he refused to do what he was told to be his duty, Matth. xix. 22. the love of the world and of this life prevailed over the love of eternal life; and our Lord says, one cannot serve two masters.

AND whereas you see many grossly wicked, alas! it is a sad truth: but the psalmist tells us, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget," or neglect to seek, "God," Ps. ix. 17. Philip. iii. 18, 19.

AND it is too true that you see many like yourselves; for our Lord tells us, "Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat," Mat. vii. 14. Wherefore he says, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate, for few there be that find it;" and that "many shall say to him

"on

“ on that day, Lord, Lord, open to us ; to whom he
 “ will say, Depart from me, I know you not, ye work-
 “ ers of iniquity,” Mat. vii. 23. which will be a sad
 disappointment to many. And, alas ! it is a common
 thing for formal lukewarm professors to look upon such
 as go beyond them in strictness, and are exercised ac-
 cording to the truth and power of godliness, and to call
 them stiff, hot-headed hypocrites : but it is because they
 themselves are ignorant, and not acquainted with the
 true nature of real religion, esteeming no more to be
 in it but decent morality and a form of religious duties.
 But our Lord says, “ Except your righteousness exceed
 “ the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall
 “ in no ways enter into the kingdom of heaven,” Mat.
 v. 20. Peter, iv. 18. says, “ If the righteous be scarce-
 “ ly saved, &c.” where, you see, all hath enough ado :
 and our Lord says, the kingdom of heaven must be ta-
 ken by violence.

And

When persons are heartily concerned and thoroughly exercised
 about the salvation of their souls, it swallows up all other con-
 cerns, and makes all other things appear but light and trivial.
 About the things of this life they rejoice as if they rejoiced not,
 and grieve as if they grieved not : and they check themselves, and
 are grieved, if at any time they find it otherwise ; if, meeting with
 losses and crosses in the world, they apprehend themselves grieved
 about it, it grieves them much more to find themselves cast down
 or vexed about it, than the loss ; and they will endeavour to
 turn their concern into a spiritual channel, and say, “ Why cast
 down about such a small thing, while so little concerned about
 the salvation of my soul ? If I have Christ, I have all, and can
 lose nothing ; if I have not Christ, what avails every thing else ?”
 And so likewise persons thoroughly exercised about salvation are
 grieved, and check themselves, if at any time they find they
 are tickled with the gains, pleasures or prosperity of worldly
 things ; or for being puffed up, or valuing themselves for worldly
 things, and rejoicing in a thing of nought, that also grieves and
 humbles them. To such as are exercised to godliness Christ is
 just all in all ; they, with the apostle, count all other things but
 as loss and dung, whose eyes are in some measure opened to
 discern spiritual and eternal things ; yet not so but that they still
 retain

AND it must be acknowledged, and is much to be lamented, that so few now-a-days appear to be really saints, by (alas!) their too much conforming to a present evil world. Yet, blessed be God, that there is yet some that give sufficient evidence to such as are capable of discerning the nature of true grace, that they are saints indeed; but they may be still called hidden ones, as Psal. lxxxiii. 3. hid from the eyes of the profane and carnal world especially, who cannot judge of their distinguishing character, nor perceive their inward excellency, Psal. xlv. 13. "The King's daughter is all glorious within; her clothing is of wrought gold." But let all be assured, that except they be real saints on earth, they shall never be saints in heaven: the difference between saints and hypocrites lyes more in internals than in externals; John iii. 3. "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily I say unto you, except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." Heb. xii. 6. "And without faith it is impossible to see God;" and Heb. xii. 14. "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord:" wherefore there is absolute necessity for regeneration; faith and holiness on earth, or no admission to heaven.

AND whereas you content yourselves by thinking you shall fare as your neighbours, and you will be no worse than others, and you cannot think a merciful God would make creatures to damn them; it is owned you are in that respect right, for it was not God's end in making rational creatures to make them only to be damned; for God made man upright, capable of glorifying him, and being happy in the enjoyment of him: his word tells us, Eccl. vii. 29. "God made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions, Hos. i. 3. "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help." And notwithstanding mankind had destroyed themselves, John iii. 16. yet "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son," (to fulfil the law

retain their natural passions and affections towards worldly things as well as others, but they are all subdued to Christ and heaven.

for them when they could not do it for themselves, and to undergo the curse and penalty which mankind lay under by reason of their rebellion and apostasy from him; and he hath purchased pardon of their sins, and a right to the heavenly inheritance, and freely offers all to such as are willing to be reconciled to God by him, and willing to be made holy and happy in the enjoyment of God) "that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life:" ver. 17. "for God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world," (as he justly might) "but that the world through him might be saved." But he also tells us, he that believes not is condemned already; there needs no new sentence, only the execution of what was pronounced on the first Adam and all his posterity, and is also incurred by every actual sin committed: "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, but men loved darkness rather than light, yea hate the light, and come not to it, lest their deeds be reproved," John xv. 22. "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloke for their sin." Ver. 24. "Now they have both seen and hated me and my Father also, without a cause. Our Lord complains and laments over obstinate sinners, and says, 'Ye will not come unto me that ye may have life,' John v. 40. From all which it is evident God did not make creatures to damn them, for he is a gracious God, and takes no pleasure in the death of sinners, Ezek. xxxiii. 11. but mankind have destroyed themselves, and brought misery on themselves: and when God, of sovereign goodness, hath provided a Saviour, and freely offers them salvation, and to restore them to their first state of holiness and happiness, yet perverse sinners obstinately despise his pardoning grace, and refuse to be reconciled, preferring the service of Satan, and the pleasures of sin for a season, to the enjoyment of God eternally in heaven: wherefore God may well say, as he does Isa. v. 4. "What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done?" And there you see how he threatens to deal with it: when pardon and mercy is rejected, what then can re-

main but a fearful looking for of wrath, which shall devour such irreclaimable adversaries ; Heb. vi. 8. " That which beareth thorns and briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned," Heb. x. 27. " what but a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries— a how much sorer punishment."—Ver. 31. " It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God ;" and it will be but poor comfort that you do but fare as other miserable wretches, and have a great multitude of devils and damned wretches shut up with you in those everlasting burnings ; yea, it will be an aggravation of your misery to have the devils continually deriding you for your folly in rejecting mercy and an offered pardon, and others of your acquaintance cursing you for having a hand in betraying them into that misery ; that will be all the comfort you will take in one another, that you are faring as they do.

AGAIN, some profane, careless creatures are heard to say, If I be elected, I shall be saved, do what I will ; and if I be not elected, I cannot be saved, do what I can ; either profanely mocking at the scripture-doctrine of election, or making it an excuse for their negligence. Yet even these careless creatures do not speak nor act so in what concerns this present life ; they trade, they work and toil, they plow and sow, as being the means appointed of God, and ground of their hope for procuring a living, and increase of their worldly riches, although they are not sure that their labour will succeed any better in temporal than spiritual things, and know not but they may be losers, more than gainers, by all their pains ; or, if they attain what they hope for, they are not sure of enjoying the fruits of their labour one day : they know not but that it may be said to them, Thou fool, this night thy soul is required of thee. But mankind's will is yet free, notwithstanding election ; and though now there is a great bias inclining to what is evil, yet no constraint from Satan, the world, or the flesh, can be laid on the will of man, though there is many snares and temptations, but nothing can constrain the will of man. Let such labour as sincerely in God's ap-
pointed

pointed way, to obtain heaven, as they do for the world, and they will surely obtain it. God still deals with mankind as rational creatures, capable of voluntary choice; wherefore he sets good and evil still before them. As he acts toward them as to their temporal happiness, so he does as to their eternal happiness, in prescribing the means to it: and, notwithstanding they voluntarily ruined themselves by disobeying him, he still offers to be reconciled to them, and hath revealed and offers his grace in the gospel, and only requires us to seek it, and willingly accept it in a humble and thankful manner, and we shall obtain it; he hath told us what is good, and what he requires of us, Micah vi. 8. and what we must do to inherit eternal life. Yea, God hath promised eternal life and happiness on much easier terms than temporal life and happiness; he hath told us, that we must maintain life by the sweat of our brows, and must work six days, but requires only one whole day of the seven for salvation-work; yea, he gives eternal life as a free gift through Christ, to all that seek it in a humble manner. Eternal life is offered by God to us on much easier and surer terms than proud man chuses for himself as the way to obtain it: and if any say faith is above their power, I say it is no more above their power than perfect works; and God hath promised to give power to believe unto salvation, John vi. 45. but nowhere promises to give power perfectly to obey the law, so as to be saved by our own works. And God hath said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and ye shall be saved," Acts xvi. 31. "But he that believes not shall be damned," Mark xvi. 16. and encourages all to their duty, saying, Prov. ii. 3. "If thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding, if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures, then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God." There your duty is set before you, and success promised on the doing it; and from thence you have as good ground to expect and hope for a blessing on your endeavours, as when you manure your ground, and sow it, after the best manner you can; and you have no

more to do with the decrees of election or predestination in the one case than in the other : it is only in the way of commanded duty we have any ground to hope for what tends to our happiness either as to spiritual or temporal things. We see how diligent and assiduous men are about obtaining the good things of this life : necessity obliges the poor to work and toil all the day long ; ambition to be rich excites others to incessant anxious care and labour to get wealth ; yea the rich, as well as the poor, are not ashamed to turn beggars, and humbly to solicit for honourable posts and pensions from them that can give them. Seeing you find you cannot dig so as to gain life by the law, will you be ashamed to beg of God, who gives liberally, and upbraids not ? “ But the wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not call upon God ; God is not in all his thoughts,” Psal. x. 4. Can any reasonably expect to get what they will neither seek nor take when offered to them ? Acts xiii. 46. “ Then Paul waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should
“ first

Acts xv. 18. “ Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.” Every thing that concerns you, health and sickness, prosperity and adversity, and even things that to you appear accidental, your days and hours of life, are all equally foreknown, and immutably decreed of God, as your salvation or damnation is, though they are not of equal importance to you. Your very thoughts and words are foreknown to God what they shall be, Psal. cxxxix. 2. Dan. ii. 27. A sparrow is not forgotten, and cannot fall to the ground without God, who hath infallibly decreed every thing that is, or will, or can be ; all is equally known to God, and nothing can come to pass but what he hath fore-ordained and determined shall be, and nor men nor devils can possibly prevent it. God’s decrees doth not depend on our actions, as some men would have them, but our actions depend on his decrees ; and yet, in all, God doth no way infringe the freedom of our wills ; never any man consulted the decrees of God, nor did withhold from doing any thing upon that account, because it is impossible for him to know what God’s decrees are, before he reveal them, or things coming to pass manifest them.

“ first have been spoken to you ; but seeing ye put it
 “ from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eter-
 “ nal life, (or it unworthy your seeking after) lo, we
 “ turn to the Gentiles.” Is it not then just with God
 to deal so with you, who wilfully reject or neglect the
 means of obtaining grace ? In the things of the world,
 though you meet with many disappointments, yet you
 still try again and again ; and if one way of doing will
 not answer, you try another ; if you cannot live by
 one trade, you try another ; for you reason with your-
 self, “ I must do something to live ; I cannot, I will
 not starve.” And do you not judge eternal life more
 necessary and more important to you, than whether you
 be rich or poor in this world, or whether you live long,
 or die soon out of it ? The consideration of these things
 will render you altogether inexcusable, if you neglect.
 My brethren, do but act as rationally and diligently
 in seeking after eternal happiness, as you do in seeking
 temporal happiness, and you have no ground to fear
 you shall be disappointed ; the decrees of election shall
 never stand in your way, Deut. xxix. 29

NAY, though it were so, it would be acting a most
 wise and rational part, though you should strive by the
 most diligent endeavours, doing all you possibly can do
 in the use of means all your life, and using the greatest
 mortification and self-denial, abstaining from, and watch-
 ing against your most beloved sins. And though you
 were to come short, and be disappointed of heaven,
 and thrust down to hell at last, would it not, think you,
 mitigate your inward torment much, if you could reflect
 and say, “ I had no hand in bringing this misery upon
 myself ; I did what I could in watching to avoid sin and
 keep myself from mine iniquity, and did all that I knew
 to be my duty, endeavouring to please God, and obtain
 heaven, and escape hell : it is only owing to God’s
 decree of election that I am here miserable, nothing was
 wanting on my part that was in my power to do.”
 Would not even such a thought be an alleviation or
 mitigation of the torments of the damned ; whereas the
 dreadful heart-cutting reflection of having neglected,
 rejected and abused offered pardon and grace, pre-

ferring the vile pleasures of sin for such a short season, to everlasting pleasure and happiness in heaven, ah how horrible will such a reflection be ! how will the damned be made to justify God, and curse and condemn themselves for their madness and folly !

AND though election did stand in the way of any that sought salvation by Christ, so as they could not obtain it, yet were it not far wiser and better for them, at least, to keep themselves from sinning and offending against God as much as in their power, seeing they must pay so dear for it ? is there any proportion between seventy, eighty, or an hundred years spent in the enjoyment of all the pleasures that sin and the world can afford, or the flesh is capable of enjoying, and millions of millions of ages, even eternally suffering a greater degree of the wrath and indignation of God, and the torment of their own conscience perpetually gnawing with the bitterest reflections and upbraidings for their folly, even in but heightning their punishment ? It is moving to see how nice and delicate some are about their bodies, and in their food and apparel, while their souls are neglected, and are within very rottenness and putrefaction, as our Lord says in another case ! Matth. xxiii. 27. like whited sepulchres ; so it may be said of many. Oh ! that these who spend their precious time in vanity, and in fulfilling the lusts of the flesh, and following sinful pleasures and diversions, and are so tender and delicate in pampering and adorning their bodies, would consider these things, and that the body as well as the soul shall be the seat of torment, misery and of everlasting shame and contempt, and none to pity ! Every one will be rewarded according to their works ; such as sow to the flesh shall reap but corruption, Rev. xxii. 12. and Rev. xviii. 7. " How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her : " the greater the guilt is, so in proportion will be the punishment, and the more pleasure in sin, the more torment will it yield at last.

AGAIN,

Or if you doubt, and endeavour to bring yourselves to think there is no state of rewards nor punishments, no eternity of happiness nor misery ; yet, as you find you cannot be sure, by

AGAIN, some are so blinded by Satan and their corrupt lusts and affections, and so dreadfully profane, as to deny the fulfilment of their lusts, and the grossest gratifying and pleasing of their corrupt affections, to be sinful, or dishonouring and displeasing to God; for, say they, why did God give us such passions and affections, but to be gratified? This is indeed almost the highest pitch of profanity Satan can carry to, or corrupt nature can go; this is indeed what is said of the wicked, Psal. l. 21. "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself, and did approve thy sin:" but God says, "I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes," 22. verse, "Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver." This is representing God to themselves, to be such an one as Bacchus, Cupid and the Heathen profane deities, which is a sin against the light of nature; for it is impressed upon all mankind, even upon the conscience of the most brutish-ly ignorant, that God is a holy God, a hater, and dreadful avenger of sin: for all are conscious to themselves, that

all your reasonings against it, while you see the most wise, judicious and sober, endeavour to live in this world as if they were quite sure that there is such an after state. If they should be annihilate and so be disappointed, they are incapable of grieving for the loss of enjoying the pleasures of sin for a season; but if you be disappointed, how fatal, how dreadful will it be, if you, like Esau, forfeit eternal happiness for a poor morsel on earth! One would reckon them weak and foolish, that would not venture a penny to have one chance of three, to gain a thousand pound by it; yet more weak and foolish is poor blind deluded sinners, in not venturing, when they are sure they can lose nothing, but be gainers every way; for sincerity, temperance and sobriety is, in its own nature, more agreeable to reason, more pleasant and profitable for the enjoyment of this present life; and we see sobriety and morality is esteemed best by men of the highest character, by their laws enjoining it, and threatening punishment to those who live contrary to the dictates of reason and laws of man. If man think it just to punish such as transgress their laws, shall it be thought hard or unjust for God to punish such as transgress his laws, Rom. ii. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. Rom. xiii. 3, 4. Acts xxvi. 8.

that when they do evil they offend and provoke God, and do find a pleasant sensation after doing good.

INDEED such creatures who have as much of the devil as the brute, scarce deserve to be dealt with by arguments; for such pay no regard to scripture, and they oppose the light of nature and reason; yet some such take the name of Christians, but they are rather Mahometans, seeing they place their chief happiness in the fulfilment of the lusts of the flesh as the beasts. Did they read the bible, they might there find a rational account how the nature of man came to be so corrupted, and that God did not make him so, but that he made himself so, and how that corruption of nature is transmitted. Had God created mankind as they now are, indeed they could not have been guilty of sin, nor could he be justly offended with them: but we may safely say, it was impossible for a holy sin-hating God to create such vile affections, and make a creature hating and alienate from himself; to suppose such a thing, is the vilest affront to God, who takes no pleasure in wickedness, neither shall evil dwell with him, Psal. v. 4. "For the righteous Lord loveth
"righteousness, his countenance doth behold the up-
"right," Psal. xi. 7. "His soul abhorreth the wicked.
"The Lord made man at first wholly a right seed, though
"now he is turned into the degenerate plant of a
"strange vine," Jer. ii. 21. These vile affections flow from another parent, even of their father the devil, John viii. 44. to whose power God justly gave mankind up, because of their yielding to his temptations: yet a gracious God sent his own Son into the world to destroy the works of the devil, John iii. 8. But some such vile monsters of wickedness, not only practically, but sometimes verbally say, they love their master and his works; wherefore God may justly give them up to him to pay them their wages; Job xxxvi. 18. "But because
"there is wrath, beware lest he take you away with
"his stroke; then a great ransom cannot deliver thee."

MY

How affecting is it to consider, that when God hath so exalted and dignified the human nature, even above the angelical nature,

MY brethren, working people and such as are in low condition as to this world, towards whom, in a special manner, I desire to have all sympathy and compassion, as the apostle says, Rom. xi. 14. "if by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh," so as to save some of them; oh that I knew what arguments would, by the blessing of God, prevail with you to mind those things that concern your eternal peace before they be hid from your eyes! Matth. xxiii. 37. Oh that it may not be said of any of you, "Wherefore is there a price put into the hand of a fool, that hath no heart to improve it?"

MY brethren, pray consider the vast importance of an eternity of misery and an eternity of happiness, and the preciousness of your immortal souls. Ah eternity! how awful a thought is it! it goes infinitely beyond and swallows up all thought: the happiness or misery of this world comes soon to an end, but the thought and apprehension of an eternity of vastly greater misery than any creature is able to endure in this life for one hour, what dread and horror does it fill with! the very thought of it is shocking and painful. Solomon says, Prov. xviii. 14. a man may sustain under the miseries and infirmities of this life, "but a wounded spirit who can bear." Job, who with patience sustained the sudden

nature, in that he who is true God, is also a true man, possessor of the same human nature with us, having a real body and rational soul, such as we have, Heb. ii. 14. and is appointed head and Lord of angels; and they are commanded to worship him, Heb. i. 6. and obey him as their Lord, and they are appointed by him to be ministering spirits to mankind, Heb. i. 14. yet how many do we see debasing the human nature much below the nature of beasts, living worse than beasts, knowing and seeking after no other happiness than what arises from the gratification of their sensual and sensitive desires and appetites, as if they had not rational souls; yea, doing things, and forcing nature to what the beasts cannot be compelled to? Surely such may be accounted more vile than the beasts, who thus debase human nature; beasts do according to nature without reason, while they more than brutishly act in opposition to nature and reason.

sudden loss of all his riches and a flourishing family of children all in one day, and lost his health, smitten with boyls, and was reduced from the height of worldly prosperity to the very depths of temporal adversity and misery, yet never once complained of it, but took all patiently at the hand of God : but, when God appeared to him as an enemy, and the terror of God seized his soul, he was no longer able to stand it, but breaks out with the most pitiful and doleful complaints, although God was still his friend, and but hiding himself for his trial. Oh then, what will it be when God deals with sinners as an enemy, in wrathful fury and indignation, as the just punishment of their sins, and for rejecting his grace ! oh how dreadful is the apprehension of such misery, and that when ten thousand times ten thousand years are endured in it, it will be but just to begin, no nearer an end than when it first began, when God will manifest his almighty power in the height of the punishment, and in supporting the wicked creature under it ! Oh tremble and flee from that wrath which will ever be wrath to come, and to come to all eternity ! oh then fly in time to the city of refuge, Christ, the hope set before you !

MY brethren, though you may be low and despised by the unthinking world, yet know and consider you have heaven-born, immortal souls, capable of an eternity of happiness or misery, and one of them must be your portion for ever : the immortal soul even of the poorest

I have read of a gay young lady, who followed diversions and pleasures, who one night coming in late, frisked into the room suddenly, where she found her woman sitting waiting for her, and a book before her open. The young lady peeping on it, observed the word *eternity*, which went like an arrow to her heart : when she went to bed, she could not sleep, the word *eternity* still running in her mind, which brought her to consider what an awful and important thing it was to be prepared for it, and how little she had minded it. That one word and thought fixed in her mind, till it brought about a sound conversion and reformation from the flesh-pleasing vanities of the world.

poorest and most despised, is of more intrinsic value than all the material part of the creation of God, and is of equal value and dignity before God as the soul of the highest prince, and capable of the same blessedness and happiness throughout eternity. Christ paid as much price to redeem the soul of Lazarus the beggar, as he did for the soul of king David; and you have the same free access to God through Christ, as Abraham or the apostle Paul had. When the tabernacle was to be reared up, because it was to be a common thing to the poor as well as the rich, the poor were also required to contribute to it, and the rich were not to pay more for the atonement of their souls than the poor; all were to have equal access to, and interest in the tabernacle, Lev. xxx. 15. God is no respecter of persons; he regards not the rich and noble the more because of their high birth and riches, nor despises the poor because of their poverty: if you pray in faith, founded on the merit and intercession of Christ, your prayers will have as full acceptance with God, as the most reverend minister of the gospel. Your being in a low condition as to this world renders you not the more unmeet or unworthy, nor doth it restrain you from any spiritual privilege, nor from the eternal enjoyment of happiness with God in heaven. God is no respecter of persons; "The rich and the poor meet together, the Lord is the maker of them both," Prov. xxii. 2.

MY brethren, the word of God fully warrants me to say, That your low condition in this world ought rather to be an excitement and an encouragement to you, and an help to strengthen and stir up your faith and hope in the mercy of God, by pleading the many encouraging promises that appear to be chiefly, if not wholly, given for strengthening the hope of such as are in a poor, low, and afflicted condition in this world. See what the apostle James says, chap. ii. 5. "Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom God hath promised to them that love him?" And Matth. xi. 25. where our Lord adores the sovereignty and wisdom of God, saying, "I thank thee, O

“ Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast
 “ hid these things from the wise and prudent, and re-
 “ vealed them to babes: even so, Father, for so it seem-
 “ ed good in thy sight.” And our blessed Lord, when
 he entered on his public ministry, and opened his com-
 mission from God, saith, Luke iv. 18. “ The Spirit of
 “ the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to
 “ preach the gospel to the poor.” And when God
 hath not allotted you good things in this life, let it en-
 courage and excite you to seek and hope for happiness
 in heaven. And when John sent his disciples to him, to
 be certified that Jesus was indeed the Messiah promised
 of God, Matth. xi. 5. he tells them, among other evi-
 dences that he was indeed the Messiah, For, says he,
 “ the poor have the gospel preached unto them.” And
 the apostle Paul, 1 Cor. i. 26. says, “ Ye see your cal-
 “ ling, brethren, how that not many wise, not many
 “ mighty, not many noble after the flesh are called; but
 “ God

Blessed be God, that though the apostle hath said, 1 Cor. i.
 20. “ Not many wise, rich and noble are called,” yet he hath
 not said, not any. And though our Lord says, Matth. xix. 23.
 how hardly these that are rich shall enter into the kingdom,
 yet he hath also said, “ What is impossible with men, is possible
 “ with God.” And we find in scripture-record a considerable
 number, when put together, of kings and princes, and of the
 rich and noble, who were as eminent in grace, as they were in
 worldly greatness; which is a certain evidence, that to be great
 and rich in this world, is not inconsistent with true piety, and
 the power of godliness: and we never find more eminence, in
 any station of life, or profession and character among men, than
 such who were truly religious attain’d to; nor more rich and
 powerful kings, nor wiser statesmen, greater and more valiant
 generals, captains and soldiers, than these who were truly reli-
 gious, and feared God. David feared not Goliath, when all
 the army fled from him; but he says of God, “ My flesh trem-
 “ bleth for fear of thee,” Psal. cxix. Nor hath there been
 greater traders, more thriving and rich, nor tradesmen more
 ingenious, rich and thriving, nor men more eminent in any pro-
 fession whatever, than some of those who have been exercised
 to godliness, and lived in a strict adherence to the rules of the
 gospel. True godliness is not below the highest, nor above the
 meanest.

“ God hath chosen the foolish to confound the wise,
 “ and God hath chosen the weak to confound the
 “ mighty, and base, and those that are despised.”
 Zeph. iii. 12. “ I will live in the midst of the afflicted
 “ and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of
 “ the Lord.” And see what Hannah says, 1 Sam. ii. 8,
 “ He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up
 “ the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among
 “ princes, and to make them inherit the throne of
 “ glory,” in the world to come. And Mary in her song,
 Luke i. 48. says, “ He hath regarded the low state of
 “ his handmaid ; he that is mighty hath done to me
 “ great things : — he hath filled the hungry with good
 “ things, and the rich he hath sent empty away.” Our
 Lord himself was so poor in this world, that he had
 not where to lay his head, Matth. viii. 20.

MY brethren, seeing a low condition in the world may
 rather be matter of encouragement for you to seek God,
 and be the more careful and diligent about the duties of
 religion ; so it ought to be made matter of upstirring
 and excitement, that as you are but poor in this world,
 you may be rich in faith, so that you may inherit the
 kingdom God hath prepared for them that love him.
 Ought not the incessant labour, toil, care, and vexati-
 ons,

“ God is love,” John iv. 8. and hates nothing but sin, be-
 cause it is directly opposite to his nature and essential holiness.
 God loves all that he created and made, and pronounced all
 good ; but God did not create, nor made he sin : it did flow
 from the devil, he gave being to sin ; neither doth God hate
 any of mankind, as they are his creatures ; it is only the sin
 and enmity to his holy nature that is in them that he hates ;
 when that is removed, he can, he will take complacency in
 them. To be given up to the power of sin and Satan is the
 greatest punishment God inflicts in this world ; and to be given
 up to the power of Satan, and to have the sinner’s corruption
 and conscience let loose upon him, is a great part of the positive
 punishment in the world to come. But blessed be God for
 Christ, who came to destroy the works of the devil, and to
 make an end of sin, and to save the sinner that is willing to be
 sanctified and made holy, without which he cannot see God.

ons, the poverty and hard living you have in this life, stir you up the more diligently and fervently to labour to enter into that rest that remains for the people of God? If care, toil, and vexation be so grievous to you, and deprives you of the comfort of life, and often makes life a burden to you, and makes you fret and murmur at the providence of God, ought not that to excite you to be diligent, lest the troubles you meet with in this world should be but the beginning of sorrows? Think not that the miseries you endure in this life is all the punishment that you shall suffer for your sins; no: I have told you, according to scripture, that there is far greater and more dreadful misery and eternal punishment to be inflicted on all the despisers and neglecters of Christ, where they shall have no rest day nor night, and the smoke of their torment ascendeth for ever and ever, Rev. xiv. 11. and where they shall be so poor, as not have a drop of water to cool their tormented tongue. Beware, then, lest your negligence do not occasion you to be far more miserable in the eternal world than you are in this. Ah! it is moving to think of so many living in such misery on earth, and have no ground of hope, but the greatest cause for a fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation in the world to come!

OH! my brethren, working people, be not like the children of Israel, who, when Moses was sent of God to deliver them, and lead them to Canaan, yet hearkened not to him, because of cruel bondage, Exod. vi. 19. the Lord suffered the Egyptians to oppress them, that they might the more gladly accept of deliverance. Oh that you who are oppressed with toil, care, vexations and afflictions in this world, may be stirred up to seek after and embrace that great salvation Christ hath wrought for you, and say not to Satan and the world as the servant of old, "We love our masters, and will not leave them," lest God nail your ear to their door-posts, so as you become their servants for ever, Deut. xv. 17. whose wages is death spiritual, temporal, and eternal.

MY brethren, consider your low condition, and your being obliged to work daily for your bread, is no unfurmountable

surmountable difficulty nor hindrance from your working
 out your salvation-work, and from being truly exer-
 cised to godliness, and doing the duties of religion. I
 have put you in mind when you may find time, with-
 out loss or hindrance to the business of the world ; for
 you may find time, so much as God will graciously ac-
 cept of, even when you are resting your wearied bodies ;
 and you will find the duties of religion, prayer, reading,
 meditation, and hearing his word preached, no toil, or
 cause of weariness to the body, but rather refreshing,
 supporting and comforting under the toils and miseries
 of this life, 2 Cor. iv. 17. Consider, what you endure is
 no greater hardship than many thousands of saints now
 in heaven had to wrestle with and endure, and many
 saints still on earth have, it may be some of your reli-
 gious neighbours and acquaintance have still to support
 under, some of whom, it may be, work along with you,
 which some of you are so ignorant and wicked as to
 despise, and deride them upon that very account, if
 you perceive them going aside to pray, or see them
 reading on a religious book, when you yourselves are
 foolishly trifling away that time that ought to be precious
 to you that have so little. But there is a time coming,
 when you shall acknowledge their wisdom, and your
 own folly ; pray God that it may be before it be too
 late : Mal. iii. 18. " Then shall ye return, and discern
 " between the righteous and the wicked, between him
 " that serveth God, and him that serveth him not."
 AND consider, work and labour was imposed on man-
 kind even in their state of innocence, Gen. ii. 15. and
 our blessed Lord, before he began his public ministry,
 did work for his bread, and thereby sanctified it to
 you ; wherefore he is called, Mark vi. 3. the carpenter ;
 and his apostles were fishermen, who had to work for
 their bread. Also the apostle Paul tells us, that his own
 hands ministered not only to his own necessities, but
 also to the necessities of those that were with him, Acts
 xx. 34. for he was by trade a tent-maker, Acts xviii. 3.
 And you may see, from 2 Cor. xi. 27. what hardships he
 endured, what weariness and painfulness, hunger and thirst,
 cold and nakedness ; and they were in such contempt,

as to be counted as the off-scourings of all things. Wherefore count it no hardship that you are obliged to work for your bread, and make it no excuse for hindering you to work out your own salvation also, Philip. ii. 12. seeing the best and most useful of all saints have endured as much toil and labour, and have suffered as great poverty, and been as much despised and contemned in the world as any of you can be. My brethren, do not regard it, though the proud, vain, haughty, unthinking part of the world despise you, as if creatures of an inferior kind, because of your low condition in this world, seeing you have immortal souls, as valuable and capable of eternal bliss and happiness as theirs, and your state in this world bids as fair for attaining it as theirs does, whatever more; and persons are valuable to the world, according as they are useful in it, and no more. Surely tradesmen and working people are more valuable to, and useful in the world, than the haughty ones, who spend their time idly in vanity, pursuing after the gratification of the lusts of the flesh, living in the world as wanton, full-fed beasts, living in pleasures that debase the soul, and are unprofitable to the world, walking in a vain show. Doth not all the high living, accommodations and ornaments of the rich, flow from the labours of tradesmen and working people? they are to them all but borrowed feathers; if every one take away their own workmanship, they would leave the haughty ones naked and bare: but God, in holy wisdom, hath been pleased to order every individual person's lot and station in the world, inclining and fitting some for one employ, and some for another, but none to be idle; for the wants and necessities of mankind are so many, that they need every one's mutual help to supply one another's wants; and these in high station stand in full as much need of those of lower stations, as they do of them in high station; but yet, as the apostle says, the foot cannot say, I have no need of the head; nor ought the head to despise the foot, and say, I have no need of thee; but, as he says, 1 Cor. xiii. 24. "The members that are least honourable, yet on them are bestowed the more abundant honour." God honours those in

low station to be the provisors and supports of a nation ; and God will reward every one according to their work ; if they do their work in obedience to him. What is a rich master without servants and such as work and provide for him the necessaries and comforts of life, or a king without subjects, or a general without an army ? It is to working people that the rich owe all their riches ; it is to his tenants and servants that the nobleman owes all his wealth and high living ; they do but bewray their weakness, vanity and folly, who are puffed up above their fellow-creatures by their riches, which make no essential difference, nor add any intrinsic value to them above others in lower stations, so as they should be despised : death levels and destroys all distinctions that are in this world, and none can claim property in it more than another. At the resurrection, none can nor will claim what was once their property ; if so, there would be a hundred to claim every estate, having had all equal right : neither will there be any superiority of station ; none will rise again princes, dukes, lords, or earls ; no more masters and servants, no more relations nor connections ; each one will stand singly, without connection or dependence one with another ; and all will be equally rich as to the world, Mark xii. 25. And you, my brethren, ought not to envy the rich, and those that live in high station, enjoying all the pleasures this world can afford them, and count them not the happy persons even in this world, much less these that bid fairest to be eternally happy : Dives was clothed in purple, and fed sumptuously every day, and you know what it ended in, Luke xvi. 23. " In hell he lift up his eyes, being in torment." And our Lord hath told us how hard it is for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God, Matth. xix. 23. there you see what a snare that poor young man's riches was to him, in making him to part with Christ rather than the world.

MY brethren, our Lord tells us, Luke xii. 15. the happiness of our lives doth not consist in the abundance of what we possess ; it is the blessing of the Lord that makes happy and rich, and adds no sorrow, Prov. x. 22. The happiness of rational creatures lyes within
G them :

them ; it is only the happiness of the animal part that lyes in the pleasures of sense ; sensual gratifications is the happiness of beasts, but the heaven-born soul aspires after more sublime things than this world can afford ; and we are in this world but for a short time, in a state of probation and trial, forming and preparing for what shall be our eternal state ; and the apostle tells us, Gal. v. 8. " If we sow to the flesh, we shall reap but corruption, but if we sow to the spirit, we shall reap life everlasting." Wherefore account that state or station in this world which exposes to fewest snares and temptations, and may be most conducive to engage and stir up to seek eternal happiness, and to promote it, count that the best, as it surely is, Prov. xxx. 8.

AND my brethren, the advantages of the rich and great, and the happiness they enjoy, is not so great (beyond what the middle, and those in lower stations of life enjoy,) as you may imagine : for by your low and private station, you are exposed to fewer snares and temptations than they ; and many of them have as much care and anxiety to support their station, as you have to support your's ; and Eccles. ii. 1. " When riches increase, they increase that eat them ; and what good to the owner, but the beholding them with his eye ?" And what are their multitudes of visitors and flatterers, their levee of attendants and servants to them, but ordinarily as means used by Satan to divert away their time, and keep them off from all serious thought and reflection about a future state ? And many of the rich envy your quiet and repose as much as you do their fulness and grandeur, and many times have as much ado to maintain their station, as you have your's ; and they have many things that cross and vex them, as well as you : and though the food of working people be not so dainty, yet they relish their coarse fare, and it is sweeter to them than the full tables of the rich ; Solomon says, Prov. xxvii. 7. " The full soul loatheth the honey-comb, but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet : " and, that " the sleep of the labouring man is sweet unto him, whether he eat little or much ; " but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep,"

"sleep," Eccl. v. 12. Tradesmen and working people, when their day's work is over, may enjoy themselves more quietly and innocently than the rich ordinarily can do, and have less to divert them from the duties of religion than they have.

AGAIN, you have little reason to envy the rich, and those who live in all fulness of the world, if you consult what is said concerning them in the word of God: read the xxxvii. lxxiii. and xlix. psalms, and Job xxi. where it is said, "They spend their days in wealth,—
"they take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the
"sound of the organ,—but say unto God, Depart from
"us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways —
"what is the Almighty that we should serve him? and
"what profit if we should pray unto him?"—
And there you see also the end of their days of vanity and folly; "In a moment they go down to the grave," ver. 23. "one dieth in his full strength, being wholly
"at ease; another dieth in the bitterness of his soul," ver. 25. "they shall ly down alike in the dust, and the
"worms shall cover them." Job xx. 11. "His bones
"are full of the sins of his youth, which shall ly down
"with him in the dust." Death destroys all worldly happiness, and distinctions of one above another; then all are equally rich as to this world.

BUT some ignorant creatures and some profane wretches desperately conclude there is no hope, and therefore they carelessly neglect the use of means, and are rather at pains to stifle convictions and shun all serious thought, and use all endeavours to drive away and drown the clamours of their conscience, by getting into company, and by diversions, frolics and mirth, and all to divert and drown the fearful forebodings of their own conscience, which they are not able to bear. To such I shall speak a little, seeing there is to be found even among the middle and lower stations of mankind some such, as well as among the rich and those in high life.

MY brethren, pray consider, that though your case is most dangerous, yet it is not quite so desperate as you may imagine, while you are out of hell, even though you may think it begins to kindle upon you already,

and you use such means to quench it, which is but pouring in oyl to quench the fire, or heaping on wood, which, though it may smother and keep it down from flaming a little while, at length it will make it burn the more terribly, and that eternally, when you can find no means to quench it.

MY brethren, I may well say concerning your stifling convictions in that manner, and your imprisoning the light of your conscience, as it is said concerning Herod, Luke iii. 19. "To all the evils he had done, he added "yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison, because he was a reprove to him:" and so many imprison their light. Oh that you would be persuaded to let conscience have its free course, and not stop its mouth! fear not, however painful and tormenting it may be, it is but for a short time: the blood of Christ is sufficient to cleanse from all sin, and to pacify the conscience, 1 John. i. 7. that, and that only, can quench the fire of hell. You find by all your endeavours to stifle it, that it still breaks out again and again, and rages the more. Be convinced that such careless stupid despair is more dishonourable to God, and provokes him more than all your grossest sins against his holy and righteous law: John xvi. 9. Our Lord says there, he will send the Comforter "to reprove the world of sin." And what sin? Not of their sins against the law, so much as of sin "because they believe not on me." And our Lord says, John xv. 22. "If I had not come and "spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now "they have no cloke for their sin." Where you may see that the sin of unbelief and rejecting Christ is greater and more dishonouring to God than all your most aggravated wickednesses and sins against the law put together. And believe it for a certain truth, that all the vile and abominable wickedness you have been guilty of will not damn you, if you do not add that above all, and which is worse than all, the sin of unbelief. Whatever you are, have been, or done against God's law, if you will yet flee to Christ, believe on him, trust in him, receive and rest on him as he is offered in the gospel, and be willing to be made clean, you shall yet be saved;

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saved; Acts xvi. 31. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ,
 "and thou shalt be saved:" Mark xvi. 16. "but he
 "that believeth not shall be damned." Acts xvii. 30.
 "The times of ignorance God winked at, but now
 "commandeth all men every where to believe." "Tho'
 "your sins be as crimson and scarlet, they shall be
 "purged away."

I KNOW that the sin of unbelief is often considered rather as a weakness and inability, than a wickedness, even among some that are not of the worst, and that a natural conscience will more sharply reprove for making a lie, than for the sin of unbelief: wherefore, as our Lord tells us in that forecited 16th of John, it is the Spirit that must convince of the exceeding sinfulness of unbelief. But, alas! too many rest on a general faith; they think they believe the bible to be the word of God, and Christ to be the Saviour of sinners; and so trust and rest secure, without ever flying to him from a conviction of their lost state, and make no personal application to him and of him: but such a loose, general, dead faith will avail nothing to salvation. Wherefore

I SHALL yet endeavour to set before such careless, thoughtless sinners a few more of the many great and gracious promises made by God to us in his word, for their encouragement yet to flee to Christ, and bethink themselves

God is more dishonoured and provoked by not believing and trusting to his mercy and grace in Christ, when he hath given you all the evidence and assurance that you can reasonably require, than by any sins you can possibly be guilty of, to allude to what our Lord says, Matth. xxi, 36. though they would not receive and believe the prophets he sent, yet it is said, They will reverence or believe my Son. Now when God hath sent his own Son to purchase pardon, proclaim and secure grace to you: if you will not believe him, and receive pardon and grace, what more can be done? is it not just with God, as it is there said, to send forth his armies and destroy those self-murderers who will not have life. It is the great end of God to glorify Christ, and his grace through him; but when you refuse to believe and receive Christ, you do the greatest dishonour and indignity to God that you are capable of, and dishonour Christ whom God hath exalted Lord of all, Psal. ii. 9.

themselves while the door of mercy is yet open to them, Rev. iii. 7. " Behold I have set before you an open door, and no man can shut it. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." Rev. iii. 20. " Behold I stand at the door and knock, if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in and sup with him, and he with me." Prov. i. 23. " Turn you at my reproof; behold I will pour out my Spirit upon you, I will make known my words to you." Isa. i. 18. " Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as crimson and scarlet, they shall be white as snow, though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Isa. lv. 6. " Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call on him while he is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon: for my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord: for as the heavens are high above the earth, so are my thoughts and ways above yours."

WHAT plainer, what greater assurances can you desire from Jehovah the God of truth, from God who cannot lie nor deceive? Tit. i. 2. He whose infinite perfections are bounded and girt about by his truth, Psal. 89. 8. and Heb. vi. 17. he condescends to swear by himself, thereby giving immutable assurance, and sure ground for strong consolation to all that flee to Christ for pardon and refuge from avenging justice; and hath ratified all his promises, delivering them over to us by way of a testament, sealed and made irrevocable by the blood and death of his own Son, the testator, Heb. ix. 16.

SEE what gracious invitations he gives to all sinners of mankind to come to him for mercy; none are excluded, as you see: those whose sins are as crimson and scarlet for their atrocious nature, and great aggravations, even these are called to come, as said before. See Isa. lv. " Ho every one that thirsteth, (or desires to be saved) come ye; and he that hath no money," or

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good qualifications, that sees nothing in himself but sin and unworthiness, yet "come without money, and make no price, and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." And you see what the covenant is, Heb. viii. 12. "I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." And Jer. xxx. 33. "I will write my law in their hearts." And Ezek. xxxvi. "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; a new heart also will I give you, and take away the stony heart; and I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes." Ezek. xxxvi. 20. "I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." There you see what security is given you for sanctification and perseverance. John vii. 37. "Jesus stood and cried, If any man thirst, let him come unto

There are also some carried away with a kind of thoughtless, careless, stupid kind of despair, saying, as some of old, "There is no hope, we have loved idols, and after them we will go: if we pine away in our iniquities, how then shall we live?" Ezek. xxxvii. 11. "Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost." They find the prevailing power of sin and corruption so strong, evil habits so rooted, that they find it is impossible for them to overcome them, and so think it vain to attempt it; wherefore they endeavour to cast off fear, and desperately yield up themselves to the fulfillment of their lusts, whatever be the consequence. But if such would but be persuaded to search the scriptures, they would find their case not quite desperate, and that there is yet hope concerning them: for all that Christ requires of them is, but to yield up themselves to him, and he will work all his work in them, and for them. Isa. xxvi. 12. "Work in them both to will and to do of his own good pleasure," Philip. ii. 13. He will subdue their iniquities, which they could not do of themselves. Micah vii. 19. "He will heal their backslidings, and love them freely." Hosea xiv. 4. "He will put his Spirit within them, and cause them to walk in his statutes." Ezek. xxxvi. 27. "And put his fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from him for ever." Consider Christ is exalted as a prince and Saviour, to give repentance, as well as remission of sins.

"unto me and drink." Matth. xi. 28. "Come unto
 "me, all ye that labour (under the guilt and power of
 "sin) and I will give you rest to your souls :—for my
 "yoke is easy, and my burden is light." John vi. 37.
 "And him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast
 "out." Fear not to come because you are sinners, or
 because you are greater sinners than others ; for where
 sins abound, grace is the more glorified in you by su-
 perabounding, Rom. v. 20. Hear what God says, Isa.
 xxvii. 4. "Fury is not in me ; let him take hold of
 "my strength, that he may make peace with me, and
 "he shall make peace with me." And Psal. ciii. 8.
 "The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger,
 "and plenteous in mercy. The whole need not the
 "physician, but they that are sick ;" and Christ "came
 "not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance,"
 Matth. ix. 12. And you see what welcome reception
 you will get, in the parable of the returning prodigal,
 Luke xv. 20. "When he was yet a great way off, his
 "father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and
 "fell on his neck, and kissed him," &c. These are
 but a very few of the many encouraging promises God
 hath given in his word : and hear how he expostulates
 with sinners, saying, Ezek. xxxiii. 11. "Turn ye,
 "turn ye, why will ye die ? as I live, saith the Lord,
 "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked : " and
 says to the obstinate Jews, "And ye will not come un-
 "to me that ye might have life." See how the Savi-
 our weeps over them, saying, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem !
 "thou that killest the prophets, and stonest 'them
 "which are sent unto thee (sure that is the most aggra-
 "vated wickedness and guilt) yet, says he, how often
 "would I have gathered thy children, even as a hen
 "gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye
 "would not ?" Luke xiii. 34. My brethren, you may
 see by these scriptures, that it is neither the great num-
 ber, nor the aggravated nature of your sins, nor
 your long continuing in the practice of them, that can be
 any obstacle from your finding mercy ; for if you be
 willing to be reconciled to God, he is willing to be re-
 conciled to you, and to pardon all your sins for Christ's
 sake ; 2 Cor. v. 20. "God is in Christ reconciling the

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“ world to himself, not imputing their transgressions ;
 “ for he hath made him to be sin that knew no sin,
 “ that we might be made the righteousness of God in
 “ him :” and you have the word of reconciliation read
 therefore his word, and hear his gospel preached, and
 count it a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance,
 that Christ came to save the chief of sinners.

AND you the poor and the working people, he
 sends and calls to you, as it were, when at your work,
 Luke xiv. 21. “ The master of the house said to his
 “ servants, Go out to the streets and lanes of the city,
 “ and bring in hither the poor and the maimed, the halt
 “ and the blind ; and go out to the high-ways and
 “ hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house
 “ may be filled.” You poor labouring persons, God
 calls you, yea compells you, by his word and providence :
 O then refuse not. I have told you, from his word of
 truth, that God seems to have something of a peculiar con-
 cern and regard for you of low condition, in that as he
 hath not bestowed on you the good things of this life, you
 may seek, and he bestow some better things that he hath
 in reserve, even durable riches, a crown of righteousness
 which he hath laid up for them that love his appearing,

Christ is appointed and sent to us of God in the character of
 Physician, Luke iv. 18. and vi. 22. to cure the blind, deaf,
 lame, and dumb, to heal the sick, and cleanse the lepers ; and
 sure he will be faithful to him that appointed him, Heb. iii. 2.
 What would you say, if, when lame, sick, or diseased, and
 you apply to your physician, if he should say to you, I will have
 nothing to do with you till you be better, then I will come to
 you, or you may come to me ? would you think such an one
 were answering the end of his character and profession, and
 faithful to his trust ? Would you not say to him, It is because
 I am sick and diseased I betake myself to you ; if I were
 whole, I would have no need of a physician ; therefore, as you
 would be found a faithful and skilful physician, I desire and ex-
 pect you will cure me. Go, use such arguments with Christ, and
 he will cure and cleanse you, and will be found faithful to him
 that appointed him : for he will not cast out nor reject any that
 come to him as a Saviour and Physician, seeking to be delivered
 from the power, as much as from the guilt, of sin. Ever look to
 him as a complete Saviour, and seek a complete salvation.

2 Tim. iv. 3. Oh then take heed that you do not come short through your negligence and unbelief: O be wise, and set your hearts to seek the Lord: if you seek him, he will be found of you; but if you neglect or forsake him, he will cast you off for ever, 1 Chro. xxviii. 9. Oh what pity is it, that these who enjoy so little of the comforts of this life, should be so foolish, as, by their own sloth and carelessness, to lose eternal life also, and to render themselves far more miserable in the eternal world than they are in this! But, alas, how does Satan blind the minds of stupid, careless sinners!

YET, my brethren, you who are servants, I must put you in mind, that though you stand on an equal level with your masters before God as to what concerns spiritual and eternal things, however high their station, or whatever be their character, yet still remember, the sovereign Lord of all, as he hath been pleased to place you but in a low station in this world, you ought willingly to submit, and be content with it, especially seeing it is but for a short time: and, from a principle of conscience and obedience to God, you ought to be faithful and obedient servants to your masters, for God hath promised to reward such himself: hear what the apostle says, Collos. iii. 22. "Servants, obey in all things your
 " masters according to the flesh, not with eye service, as
 " men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God:
 " and whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord,
 " as knowing ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance, but he that doth wrong shall suffer for the
 " wrong he hath done; and there is no respect of persons with him." 1 Pet. ii. 18. "Servants, be subject to your masters in all things with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but to the froward also,
 " for this is thank-worthy." If a man, from conscience toward God, "suffer wrongfully, and endure grief," &c. And he there sets before you the example of our blessed Lord, who, when he was reviled, reviled not again, but committed his cause to him that judgeth righteously: and Paul says to Timothy, chap. ii. 9. "Exhort
 " servants to be obedient in all things to their masters,
 " and to please them well, not answering again, not
 " pur-

“ purloining, but shewing all good fidelity, that they
 “ may adorn the gospel in all things.” And ever re-
 member what our Lord says, Luke xvi. 10. “ He that
 “ is unfaithful in that which is least, is unfaithful also in
 “ much ;” and be assured, such as are unfaithful to man
 cannot be faithful to God, and will not receive that ap-
 probation, “ Well done, good and faithful servant.”
 But if you be faithful in serving God and your masters,
 you will meet with that gracious acceptance and appro-
 bation, “ Well done, good and faithful servant ; thou
 “ hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee
 “ ruler over much ; enter thou into the joy of thy
 “ Lord,” Matth. xxv. 23. Eph. vi. 9. “ And ye ma-
 “ sters, do the same things to your servants, forbearing
 “ threatening, knowing that your Master also is in hea-
 “ ven ; neither is there respect of persons with him.”
 Wherefore,

I SHALL

How much is the prosperity of the nation boasted of, on the
 account of the encrease of national wealth and improvements
 in agriculture, encrease and improvements in trade and manu-
 factures, encrease of knowledge and politeness of manners, and
 of gaiety or rather vanity of dress, and also of the civil liberty
 we enjoy, as if we wanted nothing to constitute us a free and
 happy people ! It must be acknowledged these things, which
 we indeed in a considerable measure enjoy, are temporal blef-
 sings good in themselves, if they were not perverted and abu-
 sed : but how evident is it that the far too eager and keen pur-
 suit after these things has almost quite justified out any thought
 or concern about religion with the most part ? and it is with us,
 as the apostle says, “ All mind their own things, but few the
 “ things of Christ.” And it is evident that in proportion as
 there has been a zealous and earnest pursuing after the encrease
 of trade and improvements, which for a considerable number
 of years have indeed encreased, but in much the same propor-
 tion the life and practice of religion hath dwindled away among
 all stations of men. Not that industry and religion cannot sub-
 sist together ; if rightly managed, they may and ought to be
 mutually assistant to each other : but it flows from the corrup-
 tion of men ; we find in sacred history, that religion and the
 flourishing state of the Jewish nation ordinarily kept equal pace ;
 but we now, like Jeshurun, Deut. xxxii. 15. “ have waxed

I SHALL now address myself more particularly to you who are masters and mistresses of families : And think with yourselves, if your servants, and those who have but little time and few opportunities wherein they can be exercised about the duties of religion, and, it may be, many of them have got but little instruction, thro' the negligence or poverty of their parents, if they shall be found inexcusable for neglecting the one thing needful, how much more shall you be, who have got, many of you, better education, and have more time and opportunities for being exercised about the duties of religion at your command ? if the servant that had but one talent put into his hand was condemned as a wicked and slothful servant, because he did not improve it for his master ; how much more guilty will those be found,

“ fat and wanton, and kick against God, and forget our Rock, “ and say, (as they) We are lords, and will come no more to “ thee.” How many now forsake the house of God, and attend plays, and other public diversions and amusements inconsistent with the life and practice of religion ? We boast of civil liberty, as if the only thing to be regarded ; while, alas ! those who ought to maintain our religious liberties tamely give them up to serve themselves, Mal. ii. 1. and i. 10. which is a certain evidence how little religion and the interests of Christ and his people are regarded by them and us. And how evident are the woful effects ? Ever since our unalienable privilege, and the hedge was taken away, we revel in fulness of bread and outward prosperity for a while, as if nothing else were to be regarded, and but little regard the most dreadful of all judgments we ly under, the withdrawment of the Spirit of God and a spiritual famine, and being given up to a carnal, worldly, selfish, flesh-pleasing disposition, and many to profanity, contempt of God and religion, to prodigality and vanity, each one walking in a vain show, Psal. xxxix. 6. and to a spirit of deism. Error, heresy, and sectarian separations, I suppose, abound as much now as they did in the last century, before the Lord brought on this church and land that dreadful persecution. Yet how many are there who chaunt to the sound of the viol, invent instruments of music, and drink wine in bowls, but are not grieved for the afflictions of Joseph ? Amos vi. 5. nor is the reproach of the solemn assembly a burden to them, Zeph. iii. 18. God gives us what we most desire, but hath sent leanness to our souls, Psal. cvi. 15.

who have some two, some five, and some ten talents' if they be found neglecting that important and one thing necessary, which is the end for which they have received them, and abusing and perverting God's gifts of providence, which were given them to improve for his glory, their own good, and the good of others? Remember our Lord hath said, of whom much is given much will be required, Luke xii. 48. You need seldom ever want time and convenience for secret prayer, and reading God's word, and attending his ordinances: even masters who are tradesmen, who are obliged to look after their servants, and to work themselves, yet have the ordering of their own time; and men of business and husbandmen can easily order their affairs so as they may have abundance of time not only to worship God in secret, but also for family joint worship, at least in the evening when their business and work is over. It is a delusion of Satan, and evidences a mind alienate from God, to pretend business for the neglect of the worship of God. A prudent tradesman will prefer to be done first what is most necessary, and what he knows not but it may first be called for, and what he is sure he will make most gain by, and study to please those on whom he hath most dependence, and owes most gratitude to. Do then act so towards God and your own souls with such care and prudence as you do towards the world and things concerning this life, and serve him first and best whose payment or reward is surest and greatest.

INDEED, if they can say any business or work is more necessary or more important, if you dare say it is of more importance to please and serve the world than to please and serve God, and that you should endeavour to be rich while in this world rather than obtain eternal riches, glory and happiness in the world to come, and that it is better to avoid a low condition and poverty while in this world, than eternal poverty and misery; if reason and conscience say so, then you act a prudent part; if not, may it not be justly applied, Jer. xvi. 11. "As the partridge sitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them
 "not, so is he that getteth riches and not by right, and
 "shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his
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"end shall be a fool?" The riches got by robbing God of his due, of our time and worship, will, as the apostle James says, chap. v. 3. "Your gold and silver is cankered, and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire: ye have heaped treasure for the last days." But what treasure? A treasure of guilt on the conscience, a treasure of wrath against the day of wrath, Rom. ii. 5. not the treasure our Lord exhorts you to lay up in heaven, Matth. vi. 20.

MY brethren, such as are masters of families have a great charge, however little it be considered by many; you have not only your own souls, and your own conversation, but that of your children and servants to look after: if you, by neglect of the worship of God in secret, or in your family, or by your unsuitable practices and conversation, give them bad example, and so tempt and betray them to the neglect of religion, pray consider how far you are guilty and chargeable with their sin and neglect of duty: and if they be eternally ruined by your bad example, what will they say to you and of you in another world? Oh how many servants will curse their masters, and children will curse their parents, for being so careful of their bodies, to the neglect and prejudice of their souls, and so anxious to provide well for them while in this world, but gave them neither instruction nor example to seek after the salvation of their souls! What a vain thing is it to pretend multiplicity, throng, hurry and necessity of business or of work to be done, acting as if you would take God in your hand, and, as some have said, might neglect nothing but his worship? Why, what makes you so hurried? why so involve yourselves in the world? even that is your sin and folly. Our Lord hath warned you, saying, Luke xxi. 34. "Take heed lest at any time you be overcharged with the cares of this life, and that day come upon you unawares." And will you live so constantly overcharged? even that is your sin and folly, and deprives you of the enjoyment of this life, as well as eternal life: neither is it the proper means to make rich in this world; the apostle tells you, 1 Tim. vi. 9.

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“ But they that will be rich fall into temptation, “ and many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown “ men in destruction and perdition.”—And, my brethren, the apostle tells you, “ Godliness is profitable to all things, having the promises of this life, “ as well as the life to come,” 1 Tim. iv. 8. Religion is in itself no hindrance to a due care about our worldly business; the greatest saints have been men of the greatest riches and honour in the world, and men of the greatest business; Abraham was rich, and had a great family, Job was one of the greatest men of the East, David was a great king, as were many others, Daniel was chief minister of state to a great king, and lived in a heathen’s court, the Æthiopian eunuch was a chief minister of state, yet could find time, and did not think it below him, to come up to Jerusalem to worship; Chusa, though a fine lady, did not think it below her to follow our blessed Lord, and to minister to him, Luke viii. 3. And you may see what was David’s care concerning himself, Psal. cxix. 147. “ I prevented the “ morning, and cried;” yea, seven times a-day to pray and praise, ver. 164 and Daniel, though there was a plot laid against him for his life, to keep him from it, would not neglect his stated times of prayer, Dan. vi. 13. Will any of you then, or of our great ones, pretend higher station, or greater and more important business than those? and shall any of our trading or working people pretend they cannot find time when these did? But, as our Lord says, Luke xi. 32. these will rise up in judgment, and condemn all such as pretend want of time and leisure to serve and worship God, from the multiplicity of business.

BUT

The apostle Paul, tho’ a learned and wise man, says, Philip. iii. 8. “ Yea, doubtless I count all things but loss and dung for “ the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, “ that he might know him, and the power of his resurrection, “ and the fellowship of his sufferings;” and that he might win Christ, and be found in him. The study of religion is not below the wisest and highest, nor above the lowest and meanest capacity. Would those who spend so much time in studying
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BUT some excuse themselves from family-worship for want of gifts. But I am afraid it is more for want of grace; for where-ever God confers grace, he always bestows a competent measure of gifts: but it is to be feared such don't pray as they ought in secret. Can any think themselves fit for heaven that are not fit to pray in their own families? it cannot be.

AND some say, they are ashamed to pray before their servants and children. But our Lord hath said, Luke ix. 26. "He that is ashamed of me and my words, of him will I be ashamed, when I come in glory." They that are ashamed to pray for pardon and mercy to themselves and families, and that before their families, will have more cause to be ashamed, when Christ says to them, "Depart from me, I know you not," Matth. xxv. 12. and are condemned to everlasting shame and contempt for the neglect before the whole world, Daniel xii. 2.

MY brethren, tradesmen and men of business, are you not afraid, even as concerning your worldly business,

philosophy, and earthly and terrestrial things, and the arts and sciences, which are in themselves useful to the world, and might be profitable in some measure to those that enquire into them, were they rightly used to lead them to the great Creator who works all in all; then they might be so far good to them, if moderately used: but when these studies are only used as pleasing amusements and matters of speculation, and to gain esteem, without regard to God, the time taken up that way is lost, and but a diversion from minding the one thing most needful to be known. Would they take up but the half of that time and thought these things cost them, in studying to know God in Christ, and the gospel of his grace, in a saving manner, so as to obtain heaven, where knowledge shall be made perfect, where they shall know these things even as they are known, and where they shall know the mysteries of creation and providence, and have them revealed in their connection and influence, in as great measure as they desire to know them, and also be eternally happy in viewing the perfections of God manifested in and by them, and more especially in beholding the glory of Christ and the mysteries of redeeming love; oh how much more pleasant and profitable would such a study be, which leads to so much happiness, and would bring them also to the perfect and satisfying knowledge of those things they now grope in the dark about.

ness, lest God say to you, as it is, Lev. xxvi. 28. " If ye will walk contrary to me, then I also will walk contrary to you, and I, even I will chastise you." Doth not conscience tell you sometimes, when you meet with sickness or losses, crosses and disappointments in trade, and put you in remembrance of sin, and neglect of duty? it is very blind and stupid if it do not. God may justly, and can easily cause your work or business, by some unforeseen accident, get a backset, that may cost you more time than what is necessary for secret and family worship: see what he says, Hosea v. 12. " I will be unto Israel as a moth, and as rottenness which wastes insensibly;" and Haggai i. 6. " Ye have sown much, and bring in little, earn wages and put it into a bag with holes: ye looked for much, but it is come to little, for I did blow upon it." But let me say to you, as the prophet Malachi, chap. iii. 10. " Bring ye all the tithes into the store-house, that there may be meat in mine house; and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord, if I will not open the windows of heaven, and pour out a blessing, and will rebuke the devourer:" and Haggai ii. 18. " From this day forward, from the day that the foundation of the temple was laid, from this day will I bless you." 1 Chron. xxii. 13. " Then shalt thou prosper, if thou take heed to fulfill the statutes and judgments." But do you not tremble to have your families among those, on whom that dreadful imprecation is made, Jer. xix. 25. " Pour out thy wrath on them that know thee not, and families that call not on thy name."

IF it should be said, religious persons do not thrive better in the world than their neighbours; I answer, It is not their being religious, but their negligence and want of due care in attending to the duties of religion, that is the cause of it; 2 Chron. xxiv. 20. " Why transgress ye the commandment of the Lord, that ye cannot prosper." Religion is the best friend to virtue and diligence in business; yea, it is a precept and necessary part of religion, 2 Theff. iii. 8, 12. " Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travel night and day, that we might

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“ not be chargeable to any of you. Now them that are such, we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.” And Rom. xii. 11. “ Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.” Prov. xxvii. 23. “ Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds.” Religion and virtue agree well together : religion, by these scriptures you may see, teaches industry, frugality and charity, which is the best means to make men rich and happy even in this world : religion and virtue are comely together, and ought never to be separate. Indeed, Satan, and the ignorant carnal world, represent religion as interfering and inconsistent with attaining or enjoying the good things of this world ; but sure they never heard any real Christian, that knew by experience the pleasure and profit of religion, say so. Indeed the heartless form is the most unpleasant, unprofitable thing in the world ; but religious duties are just such a burden to a renewed soul, as feathers are to a bird, which cause it to flee, or fine attire and silks to a gay lady, which they do not esteem a burden ; nay, it is only the true Christian that is capable of real gain, or of rational, solid and substantial joy and pleasure : the joy of the profane and carnal is in a thing of nought, and Solomon says, Eccl. vii. 5. “ The song and laughter of fools is but as the crackling of thorns under a pot,” a noise and blaze which ends in darkness and sorrow ; Eccl. ii. 2. “ I said of laughter, It is mad ; and of mirth, What doth it ?”

BEASTS

God made all things for himself, to serve the purposes of his own glory ; and we professed Christians are early devoted to his service : and there are but few so hardy, as in words to declare they have renounced God and their baptismal engagements, but still continue to own, that God is their Lord and Master, and that they are bound to obey and serve him ; and all, but some of the more brutishly profane, in some sort acknowledge him as their Benefactor, in their ordinary way of asking his blessing when about to eat. If then God made us for himself, holds us in life, and maintains us for his own service, and

BEASTS are as capable of the pleasure of mirth, and the gratifications of their bodily senses and appetites as men are ; these carnal pleasures do but dull and debase the heaven-born soul, whereas the pleasure and joy that results from a sense of reconciliation with God through Christ, and the enjoying a sense of his love, elevates and sublimates the soul far above what the carnal mind is capable of understanding : it is only the real Christian that is capable of relishing and enjoying rational, solid pleasure and joy, Job xx. 5. The triumphing of the wicked is but for a moment, and in the midst of

and hath also promised a great reward to such as faithfully serve him, Matth. xxv. 23. and keep his commands, Psal. xix. 11. if while we own we are his servants, called by his name, we prefer our own will to the will and commands of God, and our own carnal pleasure and worldly interest to his service and interest, how can we expect to be accounted and rewarded as faithful servants ? If those we maintain as servants, and we promise to pay wages to, should deal so with us, neglecting our work and business, and only mind their own profit and pleasure, would we not say, such servants deserved to be punished and not rewarded ? or would we be pleased, when our servants neglect what we commanded them to be sure to do first, although other pieces of service should be left not done, if they should neglect our positive command, and say, I like other work better ? Will it excuse, or dare any say to God, I love the business of the world, and take more pleasure in it, than in the worship of God ; (like Ephraim, Hosea x. 11. who loved to tread out the corn) ; and say, if I have any time to spare, I shall mind the worship of God ; if not, I must be excused, for the business of the world is duty also ? Many appear to be glad to have any excuse or pretence to keep them from the worship of God in their family, any pretence of worldly business will easily keep from private or public worship, whose hearts are set on the world ; but they deceive themselves, for we find all excuses from the necessity and multiplicity of worldly business refused, Luke xiv. 24. the things there mentioned were warrantable in their proper time ; but it is sinful to prefer minding the business of the world, so as to neglect the more important duties of religion, or to the prejudice of our eternal interest.

of their laughter the heart is sorrowful, Prov. xiv. 13.

I CANNOT but think, that it is more to get ease from the pain of, and to drown, a biting clamorous conscience, that many persons, come to years, are so fond and mad on unprofitable and sinful diversions, which yet only proves but as oyl to the fire. Oh ! that such persons would in time hear what the Spirit of God by Solomon says, Prov. ix. 5. " Come eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled ; forsake the foolish, and live, " and go in the way of understanding." The pleasure any man can take in these things, is not rational and manly, nor can possibly serve to any good purpose, but merely to gratify the carnal mind, and the folly that is bound up in the heart of mankind since they fell away from God ; but in the fulness of their sufficiency they are in want, Job xx. 22. and it is but a forced pleasure.

IT is blasphemous to think, a good and gracious God should envy the happiness of his creatures, or forbid them any thing he knows to tend to their happiness, or require any thing of them, but what he knows leads to it, he who knows our frame allows the moderate use ; and, if these carnal pleasures had tended to the real happiness of mankind, he would not have so straitly forbidden the immoderate use of them, which is both sinful and hurtful, for " God is love," John iv. 8. The apostle James hath warned us, chap. iv. 4. " The friendship of this world is enmity with " God." Oh how lamentable is it, to see many, that pretend they have no time to mind religion, spending so much time and money about vain and sinful amusements, which alienate the mind from God.

Surely many of the light, vain and profane, spend much more time, and are at far more pains about adorning and pampering their bodies, and flesh-pleasing vanities, and many in working out their own damnation, treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath, Rom. ii. 8. and spend much more time and money about their sinful diversions and vain amusements, than what the most devout and sincere Christians spend concerning the duties and exercises of religion, and the salvation of their souls. Oh that such thoughtless ones did know the value of time, before time and opportunity be over and gone ! And surely, many of the pro-

MY brethren, as I have endeavoured to speak to some of the excuses whereby ignorant, inconsiderate persons deceive themselves, and divert their minds from seriously laying to heart their eternal concerns; I shall yet speak a little to one thing with which careless persons excuse themselves; they say, they have no grace, and can do nothing, and therefore they must wait till God be pleased to give them grace, and, in the mean time, they wait and hope in his mercy. But, my brethren, I have told you before, from the word of God, that it is only in the way of duty, in the diligent use of the means of God's appointment, that you have any ground from

same pray much oftener for cursing and damnation on themselves and others, than most saints pray for salvation: surely, such as pray for damnation to themselves and to their fellow creatures, for every supposed or real injury and offence done against them, yea sometimes in sport, can never murmur against God, if he answers their prayers, and damns them for ten thousand injuries and offences done against him. Let them hear what the Spirit of God says, Psal. cix. 17. "As he loved
" cursing, so let it come unto him; as he delighted not in
" blessing, so let it be far from him; as he clothed himself
" with cursing like as a garment, so let it come into his bowels
" like water, and like oyl into his bones."

Oh, how subtil, deceitful and cruel is the devil, thus to blindfold and deceive poor creatures, driving them on to gather and heap up fuel for their everlasting burnings, and yet to represent the practice of religion as a melancholy, hard and unprofitable thing, while wisdom's ways are all pleasantness, and her paths peace! Prov. iii. 17. and a great reward is provided for all them that walk in them, Psal. xix. 11. Christ's yoke is easy and his burden light, Matth. xi. 30. and he graciously accepts of a willing mind, if his children cannot get done so much as they would. But see the cruelty of Satan! while God only required to sacrifice beasts, the devil required and caused them to sacrifice their own children in the most barbarous manner: and we see what a cruel burden of ceremonies and severities he imposes on Papists, &c. Oh, what a master do the wicked serve, whose work is drudgery, and wages death, and he leading them blindfold to the pit of destruction, as an ox to the slaughter and a fool to the correction of the stocks!

from his word to hope for grace and mercy : our Lord hath said, " Seek, and ye shall find, knock, and it shall be opened to you," Luke xiv. 24. " Strive to enter in at the strait gate ; for many shall seek (and hope) to enter in, and shall not be able : " the kingdom of heaven must be taken by violence. Now then consider, that as you are rational creatures, and have free-will, and power over your bodies, if you will you may read, pray and attend on the ordinances of God's appointment, and you are capable of moral sincerity, diligence and fervency of spirit in these things ; do what you can that way, and then you have ground, from his word, to hope that God will do for you what you cannot do of yourselves, Acts ii. 21. " And it shall come to pass, whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." Isaiah lxi. 17. " When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Jacob will not forsake them," Isaiah xl. 29. He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength," " Work out therefore your own salvation, for it is God that worketh in you both to will and do of his good pleasure," Philip. ii. 12, 13. You are by nature no worse than others, and have just as much grace as Abraham, Paul or David had, before God freely gave it to them : they were by nature no better than you, and you have just as good a claim and warrant to seek free grace as they had ; for God is no respecter of persons. See what the apostle Paul says to the saints at Ephesus, chap. ii. 4. they were children of wrath even as others ; children of disobedience, fulfilling the desires of the flesh ; " But God who is rich in mercy, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us : by grace ye are saved, through faith, and that is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God ; not of works, lest any man should boast." But if you carelessly neglect the means of God's appointment, when he hath told you, Isaiah xlv. 19. " I said not to the house of Jacob, seek ye me in vain ; and that your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord ; " your own conscience and your Judge will justly condemn you,

you, as wicked and slothful servants, for not improving but that one talent of reason you have, as God requires of you, in the diligent use of the means of grace, Matth. xxv. 26.

BUT, my brethren, it is not only diligence in the use of the means of grace for a time, but it must be a fervent, constant perseverance, with importunity. See what our Lord hath taught, Luke xviii. 1. by the importunate widow, how we must pray, and not faint; and says, If the unjust judge will hear because of importunity, how much more will God hear the prayers of them that cry to him for mercy day and night? Know that you are in a state of condemnation, that the sentence is already past, "the soul that sinneth shall die," Ezek. xxxiii. 9, 11. and you are prisoners in the hands of Satan and your own corrupt affections, and under the arrest of death, and are every moment in danger to be carried to the infernal prison, from whence there is no redemption; yet, while in this world, you are prisoners of hope, and not only a reprieve, but a pardon may be obtained, if you seek it, humbly acknowledging the justice of God in your condemnation, and fly to his pardoning mercy in Christ, trust and rest on it alone, John iii. 35. "He that believeth on the Son of God hath everlasting life, but he that believeth not on the Son of God shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." You see all are by nature children of wrath, Eph. ii. 3. till they be delivered by faith in Christ, who substituted himself in our law-room, and took upon himself the fulfillment of it, and the curse and condemnation of the law, Gal. iii. 13. and, as a second foederal head, who fulfilled the condition of the covenant, and freely offers pardon and exemption from the curse and condemnation of the law, and the reward due to obedience, to all that will humbly ask and accept of it, and trust to him alone for salvation. Pray what would you say of a condemned criminal, who would neither ask nor accept of a pardon on the easiest and best terms, and of an Israelite that refused no look to the brazen serpent when stung by the fiery serpent? Would you

not say he rightly deserved to die for his pride and obstinacy? Apply it to yourselves. But oh, my brethren! it is not only natural death that you are bound over to, which is but a small matter, but it is eternal death, a death far worse than annihilation; if you die out of Christ, you would count annihilation a great privilege: it is spiritual death, to be for ever cut off from the favour of God, and eternally lying under the effects of his dreadful wrath and vengeance; it is to be eternally under the horrible pangs of death, yet never dead, Rev. ix. 6. "They shall seek death, but shall not find it." Satan said true, Job ii. 4. "All that a man hath will he give for his life," or to save him from natural death; and will you give nothing, no, not part with your sinful lusts, which are as vipers in your bosom, to save you from eternal death? "Be astonished, O heavens! be ye horribly afraid," Jer. ii. 12. at the wickedness and madness of obstinate sinners.

BUT, my brethren, it is not a simple pardon, and only deliverance from that dreadful eternal death, but Christ hath purchased for you the kingdom of heaven, and as great happiness there as your natures are capable of enjoying, and freely offers to renew and restore your nature to its primitive purity, and to make you capable of enjoying that happiness: but if you neglect, or refuse to accept his offer, it is impossible you can be happy against your will; God cannot make you happy while you are alienate from him.

BUT, my brethren, when I would exhort and encourage you to your duty by sincere, diligent, and constant perseverance in what God requires you to be exercised about, I do not mean nor say, that, for your so doing, you shall certainly obtain salvation; no, by no means; but only in the sincere and diligent use of the means God hath appointed, you are in a more pleasing and promising way, than when you neglect the means of God's appointment. Salvation is wholly of free grace, for the sake of what Christ hath done, and neither more nor less for the sake of any thing you can do: but you have still abundant encouragement to diligence and

and to hope, seeing God says to you, Psal. xxvii. 8. " Seek ye my face;" and Isa. xlv. 9. " I said not to the seed of Jacob, Seek ye my face in vain;" and Isa. lxiv. 5. " Thou meetest him that worketh righteousness, and remembereth thy ways." The apostle indeed tells us, Rom. ix. 16 " That it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy; and that he hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth:" but that need be no discouragement to you; for if you seek mercy and salvation in the way God hath appointed it, and requires you to do, God is bound by his truth and faithfulness that you shall obtain it: for Christ hath said, " Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out," John vi. 37. And the apostle says, Heb. vi. 17, 18. " Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us." Where
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Mankind, since they fell from God, pride, self seeking, and self-conceit prevails, and is now interwoven in our nature, notwithstanding all the causes of humiliation we daily have.

But it appears to be the great design of God to manifest his sovereignty and absolute dominion over his creatures, and to humble their pride, self-conceit and self-seeking, that God alone may be exalted, seeing in him we live, move, and have a being, and have no existence but in and of God, Acts xvii. 28. and to convince them that their happiness lyes in, and depends wholly upon the communications of his free love and favour, and that they can never be happy while having self-love and self interest separate from his love, interest and glory. God, in holy sovereignty and infinite wisdom, permitted both angels and men to be humbled, by suffering them to fall into sin, to give them an experimental knowledge of his sovereignty, and their dependence on him; and, in the method of salvation, through the obedience and satisfaction of his own Son Christ Jesus, he effectually hides pride from man, that no flesh may glory in his presence, 1 Cor. i. 29. Yet man, notwithstanding, by his

you see the most absolute, immutable security is given for the salvation of all that betake themselves to Christ for salvation, Isa. xlv. 22. "Look unto me, all ye ends of the earth, and be saved; for I am God, and none else:" and verse 21. "a just God and a Saviour." And the apostle tells us how the justice and righteousness of God is manifest in pardoning sin, and accepting of them that have no righteousness of their own, as righteous in his sight, by the righteousness of Christ imputed to them, 2 Cor. v. 21. "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," Acts xiii. 39. Christ Jesus, at the appointment of God, substituted himself in the law-room of guilty, lost sinners, and perfectly obeyed and fulfilled the law, as their foederal head and representative, did all for them that God required of them, Rom. iv. 25. and suffered for their sins the curse and penalty of the law, which they were liable to; and all in their name, room, and stead, and for their behoof: and God declared he was fully satisfied, and Christ, and sinners through him, to be absolved from all that his law required, by the resurrection of Christ from the dead.

WHAT an encouragement is it to believe and trust in the salvation Christ hath wrought for us at the appointment of God, Isa. xlii. 6. when we see, by his word,

sin, he hath lost all wisdom and power to help or extricate himself out of that misery he is involved in, yet still retains pride, and self-conceit, and self-seeking prevails, without regard to the glory of God. But what God requires of us now, in our fallen and lost state, is to acknowledge his sovereignty and righteousness in permitting us to fall, and that we are justly brought into this state of condemnation by our own sin and folly, as it was of ourselves, and not of him; and that we take with the just punishment of our iniquity, Lev. xxvi. 41. and humbly seek pardon and mercy for Christ's sake: but this is quite cross to that natural pride and self-conceit that is in man: for though we know we are sinners, and ly under the displeasure of God, yet still we think to pacify him, and seek to recover ourselves by our own strength, and refuse to submit and accept of salvation in the way he offers it.

Some

word, that the law of God is more magnified and honoured by the obedience of Christ, the beloved Son of God, as our foederal head and representative, than it could have been by the most perfect obedience of Adam and all his posterity ; Isa. xlii. 21. and the holiness, justice, and hatred of God at sin, is more manifested by the sufferings of Christ, than by the sufferings of the damned in hell ! Isa. liii. 10. and the justice of God is fully satisfied, and a way opened up by Christ, for the abundant mercy of God to be bestowed on ungodly, self-condemned sinners, in a perfect consistency with all the perfections of God, Psal. lxxxv. 10. And, till a guilty, self-condemned sinner sees something of this, how that his salvation is consistent with the glory of God, he can never

Some God permits to strive and work a great deal, and a great while that way : they pray frequently and fervently with moral sincerity, and diligently attend on the duties and ordinances of religion, strive to mortify and subdue sin ; but still they find it will not do ; yea, they may look to Christ for help, but he regards them not : then they faint and are discouraged, till conscience, and the fear of hell, stir up to new vigorous endeavours ; they then turn more cold and remiss ; again they are awakened, and fall to striving again, but find it will not do ; they complain of the doctrine of election, as standing in the way ; their heart rises against it ; they murmur against God, that they should be in such a state as not to be able to help themselves, and that he should seem to refuse to help them, and seem not to pity them ; for no person in their natural state can submit to and digest what the apostle says, Rom. xi. “ It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God who sheweth mercy.” Persons in such a way are in a critical condition, yet some strive and work long in it ; but if God have no design of special mercy at last, they fall away, so as to give up with religion, or turn to some erroneous way, seeking to find peace and ease. But the cause when seeking and not finding, is their seeking and striving to find a righteousness in themselves, and to prepare themselves before they will venture to believe and trust in Christ. But such a way God will not countenance ; yet God suffers some of his elect so to do also, to humble them, and make them know their salvation is of free grace, and not of their own righteousness and strength to do so.

never have solid peace. But so it is, that God is more glorified in our salvation than in our condemnation, John xvii. 4. 2 Theff. i. 16. more glorified in heaven than in hell, Ezek. xxxiii. 11. yea, God is more glorified in a guilty, polluted, self-condemned sinner, who sees neither righteousness nor strength in himself, in his believing, trusting, and resting on the imputed righteousness of Christ, as revealed and offered in the scriptures, than he would have been by his most perfect and perpetual obedience: wherefore let guilty, self-condemned sinners endeavour to believe, that the injury to God's law, and the dishonour done to God, is fully repaired and restored by what Jesus Christ, at the appointment of God, hath done in their name, and for their behalf; and that when, in obedience to the command of God, they trust to, and rest on Christ alone for their salvation, God is more glorified than he could have been by their own personal obedience. In these things there is no jarring inconsistency, but what a gracious soul, taught of God, can easily reconcile, however it be like a parable in the mouth of fools to the carnal mind, who will not believe God, nor trust to the satisfaction, obedience and righteousness of Christ, while they see no righteousness in themselves to trust to: and, indeed, this is the mystery of faith, wrought by the power of God in true believers, who trust and hope for pardon and salvation, wholly, entirely, and alone for the sake of the righteousness of Christ, his active and passive obedience offered to them in the gospel, all which they plead before God for justification and acceptance, on the foundation of his own word, Psal. cxix. 49 Rom. iii. 25, and 26. 1 John iv. 14. and such pleading by faith, it is impossible that it can be rejected by God, Rom. iv. 16. Psal. cxix. 49.

BUT, my brethren, if you seek to establish your own righteousness, expecting to be saved because of your diligence, and being punctual in all the external parts of religion, in prayer, reading, hearing, partaking of the Lord's supper, in works of charity and mercy, your honest, circumspect, sober and decent behaviour before the world, let you be as sincerely diligent, and run as

fast

fast as you can, you will never attain salvation that way ; yea, you are rather running out of God's way, and while your hope of salvation arises from these things, you deceive yourselves ; and our Lord says, " Publicans and harlots shall enter into the kingdom of heaven before you ;" Rom. ix. 3. " But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore ? Because they sought it not by faith, but, as it were, by the works of the law." Such morality, and sober regular behaviour and conversation, and attendance on the duties and ordinances of religious worship, are good, necessary, and commendable in their own place, for there can be no real religion without these things ; but yet these are things quite distinct from gospel-holiness, which lies in the obedience of faith, love to God in Christ, and purity of heart, which will produce cleanness of hands as the native consequence, 1 John v. 3. but all the other may be only from a principle of self-love, and fear of hell, without any sincere love to God and holiness, Matth. xix. 20. " The young man said unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth ; what lack I yet ? (whilst he wanted the main thing) wherefore he went away sorrowful." Philip. iii. see what Paul says, " Yea, doubtless, I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, and do count all but dung, that I may win Christ." Though it may be presumed he did more for Christ, and attained more legal righteousness and gospel-holiness, than ever any mere man besides ; yet he rejects all as being means or having any hand in his justification before God. We must come to God in Christ, only as guilty, self-condemned sinners, who, for Christ's sake, justifies the ungodly that flee to him and believe on him, Rom. iv. 5. " We are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption of Christ Jesus."

ABOVE

When I endeavour to recommend, stir up, and encourage to sincerity, fervency, and diligence in the duties and practice of religion, I never mean nor say, that a person may rest on these things

ABOVE all things, we ought to be afraid of resting on our legal righteousness, and only trusting in Christ that his merit will render our imperfect obedience acceptable to God, and so to make up our short-comings by his perfect obedience; this is dangerous, yea, a damning delusion. The apostle says, Eph. ii. 5. "By grace ye are saved;" and Rom. xvi. 6. "And if by grace, it is no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace; but if it be of works, it is no more grace, otherwise work is no more work." Where, you see, there can be admitted no mixing your polluted, imperfect obedience with the righteousness of Christ; you must totally and finally quit the old covenant of works, before you can be admitted into the covenant of grace. There can be no greater indignity done to the holiness and justice of God, than to presume to offer any part of your unclean, imperfect obedience to go in with the righteousness of Christ, as any part of your justifying righteousness, or even to hope to recom-

things as the all of religion; no, nor to think that by so doing they recommend themselves to God's mercy, or that they shall surely find mercy because of their diligence in them: but I say, that though there is no certain connection between moral sincerity and saving grace, (for I believe many are morally sincere in their seeking to escape misery and obtain happiness, who do not seek it in the way God hath established it, in and by Christ, and so come short of it,) but this I say, God still deals with mankind as rational creatures, setting good and evil, blessing and cursing before them, and still requires us to exercise the rational powers that remain, which may carry us to the sincere and diligent practice of the external part of religion, Luke xii. 57. and it is agreeable to scripture and reason to judge, that such who, in obedience to God, hoping in his mercy, set themselves in the way of duty, and not trusting to their own righteousness and strength, but look to God, and cry for a day of power, and that he may do for them, what they find they cannot do for themselves; I say, such stand in a more acceptable and likely way of obtaining mercy, than careless, negligent sinners, Isa. lv. 6, and 7. Joshua iii. 10. Isa. i. 16, 17, 18. wherefore I say, diligence and moral sincerity is required as our duty, and their condemnation will be greater who are not.

commend yourselves to mercy by it, Jer. xxiii. 6. You be justified freely by his grace, through faith, in your persons, Acts viii. 20. that before you can do a good work, or that any goodwork done by you can be accepted of God, Heb. xi. 6. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." It was by faith that Abel offered a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, Heb. xi. 4. the material difference did not ly in what they offered, but in their faith : look up unto Jesus, and know that you are not justified for your faith as a good work ; faith is no more but the instrument, and hath no merit in it, but by faith's believing and trusting to the righteousness of Christ without you, and to nothing wrought in you, or done by you. No person ever was, nor never will be justified nor admitted to heaven any other way, nor on any other terms than the thief on the cross was, who had no righteousness of his own to plead or recommend him to mercy : and the apostle Paul, notwithstanding his usefulness and diligence, neither sought nor expected heaven any other way, but in the way of sovereign free grace, Philip. iii. 9. How much less may any now do it ?

OH beware of these things, you that have your eyes, as it were, but half opened, and have not as yet got a sufficient discovery of the pollution of your hearts and religious services, and the alienation and enmity to God that is in your hearts ; you must see that to be worse than all your actual transgressions, Matth. xv. 19. it not only adds, but aggravates all guilt, and renders you incapable of heaven. Oh cry mightily and fervently, that what you see not, God would teach you, and grant you that spirit of conviction he hath promised, John xvi. 7. Be not afraid of convictions ; without conviction it is impossible there can be conversion : entertain convictions, and beware of stifling them, lest God say, " My Spirit shall no longer strive with you," Gen. vi. 3. and God say to you, " Because I would have purged you, and ye would not be purged, therefore ye shall not be purged," but give you up to your own heart's lusts, Rev. xxii. 11. pronouncing that dreadful sentence, " He that is filthy, let him be filthy still."

AND

AND oh. beware of resting in convictions, confessions, legal repentance, and resolutions. There is some who live many years in such a way, confessing, repenting, resolving against particular sins that gall their conscience: yet, as they resolve in their own strength, and fortitude, they are again easily ensnared; yea, they will often find a stronger propensity to these very things they resolved against, than other sins; and so they are overcome, and yet resolve again, and are overcome again; and so they go on. If God hath not a special design of love, such are in danger of apostacy, and falling away altogether, Heb. vi. 8. as we see many do at this day, some to profanity, and some into a religion consisting in forms and external observances, having the form of godliness, but denying the power of it, because they never attained to it, as it would appear; and what they had appears to be taken away from them, Matth. xxv. 29. by God deserting them in the way they are in: this causes them deny Christian exercises, but if you be upright, instead of bread, God will not give you a stone, and instead of a fish give you a serpent, Mat. vii. 9. God is pure to the pure, and upright to the upright, and only deals frowardly with them who deal deceitfully and frowardly with him, Psal. xviii. 25. Neglect not what God requires: if Naaman had not, as he was commanded, gone and washed in Jordan, and the blind man gone and washed in the pool of Siloam, John vii. none of them had been healed. If you do sincerely obey God in what he requires you to do, you have all ground to believe and hope he will deal sincerely and graciously with you: it is only self seeking, not regarding the glory of God, but seeking and hoping in and for your own righteousness, that can make you fall short. But oh what shall be thought of these, who instead of cherishing and entertaining convictions, do all in their power to stifle them? But though they may do it for a little time, it will have a dreadful consequence at length, it shall be no more in their power, but their sins shall be ever before their eyes in all their horrid aggravations; there is a register kept by God and by their own conscience, and innumerable sins not not observe

observed by them, and now quite out of remembrance, will, by God and their own conscience, be all brought to remembrance, and be eternally set before their eyes, and it will not be in their power to forget or divert from the sight of them.

OH, therefore, be wise in time, while God is yet on a throne of grace as to you, and offers to pardon your sins, to blot them out, to cover and forget them, so as when sought for they shall not be found; and all he requires of you is only that you acknowledge your iniquities, which you cannot deny, seeing your own consciences do testify and witness against you: and if your own hearts condemn you, how can you expect to be justified by God? John iii. 20. Prov. xxviii. 13. "He that confesseth and forsaketh shall find mercy,"
"but

But if any should say, Why do you exhort to so much pains and diligence, if all our pains and diligence cannot bring us into a state of salvation, no, not so much as to recommend us to mercy, and the favour of God? I answer, That notwithstanding your diligence and moral sincerity cannot so much as recommend you to mercy, yet still it avails much, as you are in the way of commanded duty, which is more acceptable to God than willful, obstinate contempt and neglect; and though you be diligent in the way of duty while in your natural state, and you can neither act from a right principle, nor for a right end; yet one wilful omission of known duty dishonours God more, and draws on more guilt, than many shortcomings through involuntary infirmity. It is certain God doth not mock and speak ironically to ignorant, weak creatures, when he bids them pray, and seek his face; we find he regarded Achab's humiliation, 1 Kings xxi. 29. and the Ninevites repentance, Jonah iii. 10. so far as to avert threatened judgments; and all are encouraged to duty thereby, and may well say, as they, "Who can tell if God will turn and repent of the evil threatened, that we perish not?" You have full as good ground to hope for mercy as they had; then do as they did, humble yourselves before God, and he will raise you up in due time: do what you can, in the best manner you can, and you have ground to hope God will not be wanting to you if you endeavour to seek him in the way of his appointment; and instead of bread he will not give you a stone, Matth. vii. 9. nor instead of a fish, a serpent.

“ but he that covereth his sin shall not prosper.” Oh what dreadful shame and confusion will it cause, when the secret wickedness of many whom the world little suspected to have been guilty of such things, shall be revealed and opened up in all their abominable aggravating circumstances, before innumerable multitudes of men and angels ! No criminal was ever capable of such shame, confusion, and contempt, when the vilest crimes were clearly proven against them, as they will be at that day ; and the justice and righteousness of God will be manifested in their condemnation ? Oh then flee to Christ, whose blood covers and cleanses from all sins, and none of them shall be mentioned against you, Ezek. xxxiii. 16.

BUT oh beware that you do not rest in a general faith, thinking you believe the bible to be the word of God, and Christ to be the Saviour of the world, and that you trust in him for salvation ; all that is good, and absolutely necessary, but yet not sufficient : there must be a special personal application to and appropriation of Christ. They that do not find this faith altogether above natural powers, are quite ignorant of it, and unacquainted with the thing ; faith is the work of the Spirit of God, a thing which nothing but almighty power can work and enable to, Eph. ii. 8. a gift which none but such as shall be saved obtain, Rom. v. 17. it is a gift of righteousness, through which the ungodly are justified. General common faith is founded only upon the teaching of man, saving faith is founded on the teaching of God, John vi. 4, 5. it is as Job says, chap. xlii. 5. “ I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee ;” and that seeing being enlightened by the word and Spirit of God, makes believing such as find no great difficulty in believing, and have little fear and doubting about the truth and reality of their faith, are much ignorant of it, and have little acquaintance with themselves ; altho’ fear and doubting is and opposite and no profit to faith, yet the most part of true believers are seldom long free from fears and doubts lest they be found deceiving themselves, and afraid lest their faith be not true justifying faith,

faith, that purifies the heart, works by love, and overcomes the world: the deceitfulness of their hearts, and the awful importance of the matter, and the pollution and corruption they find in their hearts, the so often prevailing power of sin over them, the ignorance, darkness, deadness, and indisposition they often find to and in the duties of religion, often makes them fear; but such whose faith is always the same, have much more cause to doubt and fear lest they be deceiving themselves.

The carnal and ungodly are surpris'd at, and mock and deride the strict and diligent Christians, and count them hypocrites, enthusiasts, and fools for making so much ado, and being at so much pains about religion, and the salvation of their souls, and for being so stiff and precise, that they will not comply with any thing against their conscience, even although it should evidently hurt their worldly interest: but it is because they know no other principle but self-love, and the love of the world, therefore they wonder how any should do a thing that seems contrary to it, and call such hypocrites. But if the real saint, and sincere Christian, be not found among these strictly conscientious and pious persons, whom they call hypocrites, where are they to be found? shall we seek them among the formal, carnal, worldly professors, that will comply with almost any thing rather than disoblige their friend, or hurt their worldly interest, and make their conscience always subject to their friend and worldly interest? or shall we seek for the uniform, sincere Christian, in the taverns, public amusements and diversions, or in the play-house, or bad houses? Indeed such as attend these cannot, in some respect, be properly called hypocrites; for though they retain the name, yet they openly enough renounce the practice and profession of real Christians; but still they are, and may be called, the vilest and grossest hypocrites, while they do not openly and solemnly renounce their baptism and profession of Christianity, and still retain the name, while they are a scandal to the name and profession of a Christian: but were not the name of Christian an honourable badge, would such profane wretches still retain it? and if the very name be honourable, why do they abhor the nature and practice of real Christians? O how blind and inconsistent are these poor wretches, who are led by Satan, and their own strong corrupt affections! 2 Pet. ii. 12. "and speak evil of that which they understand not, and shall utterly perish in their own corruption," Jude verse 10. "Even what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves."

MY brethren, I have been endeavouring to exhort, excite and encourage you to seek the Lord while he may be found, and call upon him while he is near, seeing he calls you to-day to hearken to his voice and not harden your hearts. God takes a voluntary approved delay as a plain denial, a plain saying, you love the pleasures of sin more than the practice of that holiness without which no man can see the Lord, and that you will not quit the devil's slavery for Christ's freedom and easy yoke. But God will not, yea cannot, make

The pride and prejudice of many is astonishing ; to observe them who can scarce attain to common morality, sobriety, or decency, yet so stiffly adhere to their own righteousness, denying and rejecting the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, as if inconsistent that one should be justified by the obedience and satisfaction of another, and as if unjust that the innocent should suffer for the guilty : not duly considering the sovereignty, power, and wisdom of God, who appoints all relations and connections, and who hath constituted, appointed, and connected Jesus Christ, his own Son, in the nearest relation and union with mankind, and as the head representative of the whole body of his elect ones : so that it is but the head doing and suffering for the members of the same one body ; and believers are said to be, by the apostle, animate by the same one spirit with Christ, and he to be their life, so as they, with him, do make up one collective body, whereof he is the great head. Christ and believers are represented to us in scripture, as being in the nearest union and relation to one another that we can conceive, of such relation as the head stands in to the hand and foot, as the root and vine to its branches.

And it may seem strange, that these who have least morality, or give least obedience to the law, should be those that trust most to their own works or obedience : they trust to their own honesty and charity, even when they have neither ; for the first principle of real honesty is, to render to God what is his due ; and of charity is, to love God above all, and to love and do good to mankind out of obedience to him, and for his sake, not from a principle of self-love, in hope of being pardoned and accepted as righteous on that account ; no, that is but charity to themselves, rather than to either God or man, for such do not love the duty, they only love the reward they hope for ; but they will be miserably disappointed at last.

make any person happy against their will, nor any other way but in the way of holiness. Indeed, it may appear strange, that those who think they have sufficient power to repent, believe and obey when they please, should be always among those that delay it, and they are also those that think, that it is only for their good works they shall obtain heaven; and yet, voluntarily run such a risk of losing heaven, by their delaying to repent and begin to do good works, but continue voluntarily serving the devil, the world and the flesh; sure it is a certain evidence, they do not hate sin, but only from a principle of self-love, they hate hell the punishment of sin, and that they prefer the pleasures of sin and sensual happiness to spiritual and heavenly happiness; and all they desire or hope for is, to be freed from hell and punishment, when they can no more enjoy the pleasures of sin. As for heaven, it is impossible they can desire it, if they do not consider it as a Turkish paradise, consisting in carnal pleasures and sensitive enjoyments.

TO those who despise or carelessly neglect the great salvation now offered to them, I shall now only shew what they may lay their account with, as the dreadful consequence of such contempt or neglect, and so have done.

MY brethren, you know you must die, but the time nor manner you know not. Such as delay repentance to a death bed, have no ground to expect it, seeing God hath said, Prov. i. 25. "Because they have set at nought
 "all my counsel, and would none of my reproof, I
 "will laugh at their calamity, and mock when their
 "fear cometh; they shall call on me, but I will not
 "answer, they shall seek me early, but shall not find
 "me." But what if you be cut off by a sudden death, or a disease that deprives you of reason and judgment? then you are plunged into the bottomless pit all at once. Or if God, in just judgment, permits you to die as carelessly and stupidly as you lived, and so go to hell as the ox goes to the slaughter; what a horrible awakening out of stupidity will it be! And such as delay cannot but know, that they must be convinced of sin before

before they possible can repent ; but it is more than probable, God may awaken your conscience, and cause convictions, and yet deny you repentance : and though your terror may cause a legal repentance, know it is only the Spirit of God that worketh repentance unto life ; and you have no ground to expect that at your death, which you so often refused in your life (as before said).

OH, what horror must fill one, to think on the dreadful condition of an awakened sinner on a death-bed, when his conscience begins to bring his sins to remembrance, and horror and despair begins to seize his guilty soul ! I have seen some at much pains to get company, and to use means to divert the dreadful forebodings and gnawings of their conscience, even when near death. Ah, when they look about them and find heart and flesh failing, and that they can find no relief nor comfort from the world, and these things they set their hearts on as their hope and happiness ; and when they look upwards, and see nothing but an offended angry God as a dreadful avenger of sin, and when they look downward, and consider that horrible bottomless pit and utter darkness, the society of devils and damned spirits, these horrible regions of terror to which they are going ; and when they look forward into endless eternity, which will be ever as beginning, and never nearer an end, and when hope begins to be cut off, and horrible despair, the only death of the soul, begins to seize and prevail on the guilty soul ! surely a creature cannot be conceived to be in a more wretched condition. Though this is not often the case even with the openly profane, yet it is sometimes so : that it is not always so, is no mercy to them, but only a judgment upon other profane wretches, to let them go on the more quietly and securely, suffering them to be the more confirmed in their infidelity and impenitency, and

Oh, what folly then to shut your eyes, divert and stifle conviction now when in health ! Do you think you will be more able to bear stinging, remorse and fear, when under pain, sickness, or when the pangs and terror of death is upon you ? Is that, indeed,

miserable condition while yet in this world. However fools wantonly mock at sin, and jest with hell and damnation, while in health; yet when death and their own conscience arrests them, and they begin to find the devil apprehending and claiming the souls that wantonly gave themselves to him, they will repent their folly when it is too late. Ah! when death seizes the body, and the devil seizes the soul! how horrible the thought! And ah what will it be when the guilty soul is separate from the body, carried to and shut up in that infernal prison, those horrible regions of darkness and despair, associate with frightful devils and damned spirits, having them for their associates, accusers and tormentors, deriding and upbraiding them for their madness and folly in slighting and neglecting such a great salvation as was so dearly purchased and so freely offered to them, and for hearkening to their temptations, whose business they knew it was to divert, deceive and destroy; and to have devils telling them, if they could have obtained salvation on any terms, they would not have rejected nor neglected it! Thus Satan and their own conscience will
con-

indeed, a proper time to work out your salvation work? doth your reason and conscience say so? And yet such as delay to a death bed repentance, are always those that trust to be saved by their repentance and their good works. But what time have they then for repentance or good works? what reward then can they expect? If they love and expect a proportional reward for their works, why do not they begin more early to work, that they may have a greater reward, seeing they trust so much to their works, and only expect reward for them. And if they have sufficient power to repent when they please, how inexcusable are they for delaying it? But it appears, that they chuse as little of religion as they can in this world, and as little of the happiness of heaven in the next world as possible; but it is fully evident they neither love heaven nor hell, and count their only happiness to consist in the pleasures of sin, if they could always enjoy them. But how great will be their misery, when desire, and lust, and appetite rages, and nothing to satisfy them? for the same lusting and vile affections that they die with, will surely abide and rage vehemently with them for ever, when nothing to satisfy them.

continually accuse and vex them, and fix their sins and folly before their eyes, which then they shall not be able to divert their mind from for a moment; though now Satan endeavours to blind and divert their minds from the apprehensions and forethoughts of these things all that he can. Oh what cutting and galling reflections will the damned have when they remember how they have sported away their time in the pleasures of sin ! Luke xvi. 25. which now is to them as the most griping tormenting poison, as unquenchable fire in their bowels, the worm that never dies : and when they remember what means of grace, instructions, warnings and exhortations they enjoyed, and the convictions they sisted, and despised the offers of grace and pardon ! ah, such a wounded spirit who can bear ! All temporal misery, all bodily pain and torment is no way to be compared with that dreadful misery, even though it were to be eternally endured. Yet God almighty can and will add to these sufferings when the soul and body come to be reunited at the resurrection : and oh what a dreadful reunion, what a horrible salutation will it be between the guilty soul and the polluted ensnaring body, when the body shall awake out of the dust to shame and everlasting contempt ! Dan. xii. 2. even those bodies that were so much pampered, admired and praised while in this world, how ugly and detestable will they then appear ! then they shall be an abhorring to all flesh, Isa. lxvi. 24.

BUT if any thing can be supposed more dreadful than the wrath of the almighty God, it is the wrath of the Lamb : if the blood of Abel cried for vengeance, what a cry will the blood of the Lamb of God who came to take away the sin of the world have against all those that despise it, and trample it under their feet as an unholy thing ! Heb. x. 29. Ah, what will it be when the blood of Christ, that now cries for pardon to all that will receive it as their atonement, shall then cry for vengeance on them that have rejected it ! Then the Lamb will appear terrible as a lion, when he says, These mine enemies, that would not that I should reign over them, bring them forth, and slay them before mine eyes with an everlasting death and destruction, Luke xix. 27.

THEN

THEN Satan and his emissaries, their companions whom they delighted in, and who tempted and ensnared them into their sins and follies, shall accuse them, each one cursing, accusing and tormenting one another. And though they all will be made to acknowledge the righteousness and just retribution of God, especially sinners under the gospel, and despisers of Christ; yet, by their torment and anguish, how will their fury rage, and malice against God break forth into horrid blasphemies! Rev. xvi. 10. "And they gnawed their tongues for pain, "and they blasphemed the God of heaven because of "their pain, and repented not of their deeds:" and this is a certain evidence of the eternity of hell's torments, because repentance is hid and with-held from them; like Esau, they can find no way to change their mind, Heb. xii. 17. the natural enmity against God rather encreases, and they will hate God more and more, and maliciously blaspheme God in rage and fury. Yea, were the damned to be permitted to have another probationary trial on earth, they would still be what they were, and act the same part as they did; for it is impossible for fallen creatures to change their own nature, and remove that enmity to God, and disposition to evil, by their own powers, Jer. xiii. 23. Yet, were it possible for the damned to submit to their punishment and humble themselves before God, it would be a great mitigation of their misery; but that they cannot do, but are made their own tormentors.

AND

How manifest is it that there must and will be a separation between the godly and the wicked? If they cannot live happily together in this world, it is impossible for either of them to be happy in one society in the world to come: the company and conversation of the godly, and religious worship, is a burden and pain to the profane; it is what they hate and shun, deride and despise; and the filthy conversation of the profane, and their unlawful deeds vex the souls of the righteous, Pet. ii. 8. For it is certain, with whatever disposition either to sin or holiness we die in, it will abide eternally, as Solomon says, Eccl. xi 3. "As the tree falleth, so it will ly." It is neither scriptural nor rational to suppose such whose very nature and

AND when these who have despised and neglected Christ and his salvation are commanded to appear before his judgment-seat, "for every eye shall see him," Rev. i. 7. and there will be no hiding or absconding, Rev. vi. 14. the kings, the great men, and the chief captains and mighty men, those of the now most bold, daring and haughty spirits, who neither fear God nor man, shall then cry to the hills to fall on them and hide them from the sight and presence of the Lamb, and him that sits upon the throne, when that great day of his wrath is come, Isa. xxxiii. 14. then the sinners in Zion shall be afraid, and fearfulness shall seize the hypocrite; then their hypocrisy shall be disclosed, Rev. xx. 12. "And I saw the dead, "small and great, stand before God; and the books "were opened, and the dead were judged out of those "things which were written in the books, according "to their works." The book of the law of natural light written on the hearts of all, the book of the moral law and scriptures, and the book of the gospel offering pardon and salvation to all that were willing to be reconciled to God by Christ, and the book of God's omniscience and remembrance, and the book of conscience; all these books will be opened. There will be no need to lead proof, conscience will be as a thousand wit-

element in which only they can find pleasure is the fulfilling the desires of their corrupt affections, and whose delight is only in the world, or in wallowing in sinful pleasures, as the sow doth in the mire, can be happy in God, and when deprived of every thing they lust after; or to suppose they were to be admitted into heaven: the society and employment there would make them yet more unhappy. If a few hours detained in the company of the godly, or in religious worship, made them so unhappy while on earth, what an intolerable burden would it be to be confined for ever to heaven, where they would be altogether out of their element! Sin and misery are, in the constitution of God and nature of the thing, necessarily connected together; so that it is impossible for a rational creature to be happy while sin remains in them; whereby we may see the absolute necessity of regeneration and holiness of nature, without which no man can see the Lord, or be capable of enjoying the happiness of heaven.

witnesses; and none will be condemned whose own conscience doth not witness against them and condemn them, so that none will deny. Then the hidden hypocrite and empty formalist will be disclosed; then all the hidden schemes, intrigues and mysteries of iniquity, with all the shameful aggravating circumstances and dissimulation that attended them, will be opened up to the view of angels, and the world of mankind gathered together, Mat. x. 26. Mark iv. 22. Oh what shame and confusion will many be filled with, when these things which they were at so much pains to conceal from the world shall be revealed before such an assembly!

AND oh, when that dreadful, final, irreversible sentence is pronounced against the wicked and all that obeyed not the gospel, "Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels," Mat. xxv. 41. "there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth;" oh dreadful, to think upon that scene of horrors! And what a great aggravation of misery will it be to the proud and haughty spirits of some wicked ones, to see some of their servants, and those who were poor and despised on earth, whom they despised, hated, derided, mocked and persecuted, shining in glory, and sitting as assessors in judgment with Christ, and joining with him in passing that dreadful sentence upon them! and how galling and bitter will it be for those in lower stations, when they see many who did not enjoy such means, advantages and opportunities, sitting in glory with Christ; and they, by their careless neglect of improving the means of grace they had in plenty, come short, and thereby laid under the deeper condemnation, Mat. viii. 11. "Many shall come from the East and West, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of God; and the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into utter darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." And servants shall see some of their fellow-servants, who, it may be, they mocked at because of their minding the concerns of their souls and duties of religion, see them shining in glory with Christ, and themselves condemned to eternal misery, Luke xvi. 23.

AND oh what will it be when the wicked and despisers of Christ shall be hurried into the bottomless pit, and its mouth closed and sealed down by the immutable decree of God, and they bid an eternal farewell to hope and possibility of relief, or ease of torment, when total and final despair takes place, and they are delivered up to devil and other damned reprobates as their eternal companions and tormentors, each one tormenting, upbraiding, and cursing one another : then their jollity, and pleasure they take in their own sins and the sins of their companions will for ever be at an end ; and not only so, but they shall have a continual immediate sense of the vindictive wrath of God and the Lamb poured in on their souls, and their bodies will also be tormented ; and who can dwell with devouring fire and everlasting burnings ? Isa. xxxiii. 14. yet this is the cup of wrath, and the everlasting portion of all that know not God and obey not the gospel : and, as our Lord, who is appointed the judge, says of the wicked, Mat. xxv. 46. " These shall go away into everlasting punishment, " but the righteous into life eternal." And as the almighty power of God shall be manifested in upholding finite creatures under that weight of misery and wrath laid upon them, so will almighty power be put forth in upholding creatures under that far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory that shall be put upon all the members of Christ's glorified mystical body, Mat. xiii. 43. " Then shall they shine as the sun in the kingdom " of their Father."

IN the punishing of his enemies, and in bestowing of his grace, God will act suitably to his divine greatness and majesty, and will put honour on Christ by the terrible punishment inflicted on those that despised him, and by the great honour and happiness he bestows on all those that received him as their Prince and Saviour ; and they shall inherit all things, Rev. xxi. 7. But oh consider Heb. x. 28. " He that despised Moses's law died without mercy ; of how " much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought " worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, " and hath done despite to the Spirit of grace ?" ver. 31. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God ;

God ; but, on the other hand, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the things which God hath prepared for them that love him, 1 Cor. ii. 9. when the members of Christ shall inherit glory suitable and becoming their glorious head, and such as are to sit with him on his throne. And the infinite greatness and majesty of God, and the munificence and glory of his grace and love to Christ, and in Christ to his elect, shall be put forth and manifested in the greatness of the glory and happiness of those he now calls his friends, brethren and sons, even as the greatness and majesty of a king is manifested in the riches and splendor of his court, and in his royal bounty to them he loves and delights to honour. As none can conceive to what degree of glory and happiness God will raise such whom he loves and delights to honour, so neither can any know the power of God's wrath to be poured into the vessels of wrath, who now sit themselves for that dreadful destruction, by despising not only the authority of God, but more especially the love of God in Christ revealed and offered to them in the gospel. Oh what an amazing, what a dreadful contrast is there between eternal happiness and eternal misery ; Mal. iii. 18. " Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, and him that serveth God and him that serveth him not : " then there will be an eternal separation ; the wicked will no more need to avoid the society of the godly, and the godly will no more be troubled with the filthy conversation of the wicked : Psal. l. 22. " Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver you. "

My friends, I have endeavoured to warn you of your danger, and exhort you to the duty you owe to God and to yourselves : if you have any love to your bodies and souls, and desire to avoid eternal shame, pain and misery, and love to pleasure, honour and happiness, seek it in the knowledge and practice of religion, where it is only to be found ; lest you be like the thief on the cross, who perished by his perverse unbelief and neglect, when the Saviour at his side was able and willing to save him, and while his fellow, as great a sinner, obtained salvation by his making application to him.

T H E E N D.



